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*Ding Goes to*  
**RUSSIA**



RUSSIA ISN'T NEARLY AS RED AS IT HAS BEEN PAINTED.

# DING GOES TO RUSSIA

BY  
JAY N. DARLING  
CARTOONIST



WHITTLESEY HOUSE  
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## FOREWORD

EVER since the inauguration of the weird experiment of Communism and Soviet government in Russia, congressional investigation committees have warned us of the impending doom that awaited us when the Red Maelstrom, which was on the way, should engulf us all. The Soviet government spokesmen boastfully supported the statements of our own hysterical patriots with the assurance that it would be soon. Like one who is awakened in the middle of the night by an ominous noise in the basement, puts on his carpet slippers and toddles down to see what it is all about, it seemed like the logical thing to go to Russia. If something direful was going to happen to us, I was curious to know the process. Speaking for myself, I can now go back to rest in peaceful assurance of safety so far as that quarter is concerned. Whatever destruction awaits us will come from neglect of our own internal mechanisms. Our oil furnace may blow up or our gas heater smother us in noxious gases, but it will be due to our own negligence, and not to Russia.

My travels in Russia were attended with none of the oft-quoted interferences on the part of the Soviet government. Once assured that I was not a destructive agent, my days and my travels were absolutely free from any sign of guidance except that of my own hired non-communist interpreter. We went wherever we chose.



## FOREWORD

Russia, in my judgment, is serving a most valuable common purpose in becoming a great laboratory in which all of the vagabond socialistic and economic



MAP OF DING'S TRAVELS.

vagaries of the age are being tried out in actual experiment. Fortunately, we are far enough away to be safe from all except the tremors of explosions which

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may result, and yet close enough to profit by any important discoveries that may prove successful.

That my Russian trip should have resulted in a book is a complete surprise to me. But if it serves to quiet some of the hysterical fears of others, as it did mine, it will have served a good purpose.

J. N. DARLING.

DES MOINES, IOWA,  
*December, 1931.*



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**DING GOES TO RUSSIA**



# I

## HOW RED IS RUSSIA?

Moscow, U. S. S. R., Aug. 21, 1931—Russia isn't nearly so red as has been painted. Something has happened to the dye. Either the color has faded or it has crocked and come off in the wash.

There is about as much Communism left in Russia as there is tobacco in their cigarets. Most of the Russian tobacco, like their Communism, seems to be raised for export purpose and those of us who live outside of Russia are consuming most of the output while the home folks are getting along on highly adulterated substitutes. This, I presume, will be a terrible disappointment to Hamilton Fish if he ever finds it out, and to all those who have been making political capital and chautauqua lecture fees out of the Soviet Hobgoblins and Russian terrorism. Those days of horror did exist in the early nineteen twenties. Of that there can be no question. Their flag was red, their purpose was red and they were drenched in the blood of the reddest of revolutions, the story of which has never been half told.

The revolution was followed by the wildest experiment in government ever devised. Like all new found liberty it turned into a debauchery of excesses. They tried everything. Nothing worked. In operation the socialistic theories failed to come up to the glorified prospectus. Pure Communism, taken straight, was too strong to swallow. Since then they have been diluting



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it and have poured in everything and anything that was handy to take the morning-after headache out of it. Russia today presents a perfect picture of an airtight bureaucracy doing a capitalistic business on a large scale.

State capitalism has crowded out most of the elements of the Communism for which they fought. Now about all that is left of the red is in the name and the flag.

The dull drabness which drenches all life in Russia today is so heavy and so somber (to an American) that it permits almost no sunshine to show through.

Any careful analysis of the present Soviet regime will show it to be a new band of color in the rainbow of social and political orders but it is no longer red in the general understanding of the term.

A visitor has a queer sense of seeing familiar objects through a strange, exotic light—very much like the first time one walks through a factory, artificially lighted by those greenish mercury lamps which make people look as though they had come up out of a week-old grave. There is something indefinably oppressive about the whole atmosphere of it.

To those of us who grew up in the generation of the Haymarket riots, the Pinkerton raids, the assassinations of Garfield and McKinley, the anarchistic propaganda of Emma Goldman and the dynamiting, bombing and terrorist methods of Bill Haywood, the word "Red" brings up the picture of a dark, skulking figure with a bomb in each hand, a stiletto in his teeth and menacing eyes peering out from behind a half bushel of bristling black whiskers.

There is not a trace of such a picture left in the Russian situation today.

Russia is dressed in her meagre working clothes, her back is bent under a terrific load and she is struggling

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RUSSIA IS  
DRESSED IN HER MEAGRE WORKING CLOTHES.

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to rise from a level of hardship so low that it beggars description. Whatever thoughts about world conquest the Soviet government may be entertaining, one gathers a very decided impression that the great mass of people of Russia are weary unto death of turmoil and trouble and want nothing so much as to be allowed to work out their own salvation in peace and quiet.

Approaching Russia for the first time from Berlin, via Warsaw and the Polish border, a traveler's preconceived idea of Soviet Russia is greatly augmented by the increasing evidence of the Polish military hysteria directed against the new and weird social experiment of their next door neighbor on the east.

At each station along the way, as the train nears the Russian border after leaving Warsaw, the number of Polish soldiers, all fitted out and clanking in military regalia, increases. There is a crescendo of clicking heels, salutes, rattling sabers and marching squadrons entraining and detraining. An armor covered locomotive, looking like some strange antediluvian monster, attached to a long train of malign looking armored cars with slots and peep holes for machine guns, is pulled up on a side track headed toward Russia.

Barbed wire entanglements cover the approaches to the Polish bridges and vulnerable points of military advantage. One's pulse quickens with portentous qualms and anticipation. Poland has done everything possible to add fuel to the imagination. The final climax of the threatening crescendo is registered when the last armed camp on the Polish border is reached. It fairly bristles with bayonets and belligerency. Redoubts, watchtowers and searchlights all point toward the ominous power across the boundary line.

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THROUGH POLAND TO RED RUSSIA.

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One leans far out the car window to catch a first glimpse of the impending doom, the much talked of Red Gateway to Communism, Bolshevism and Soviet Russia! It is the gateway which every correspondent who goes this way has written about. I expected to see a blood red arch in the manner of Constantine or Napoleon spanning the railroad track, but instead, as the train moved slowly across the border without even so much as a bumpy switch to jar the emotions we passed a wooden gateway, for all the world like the temporary bunting covered frames we build across our Main Streets at home when the Elks have a carnival or the County Fair is on. There were strips of faded red bunting here too, somewhat bedraggled and weatherbeaten as though the event for which they had been put up had passed.

There were slogans of welcome to the downtrodden world to enter and find a haven of rest and unparalleled hospitality.

I could not help thinking how universal is the human habit of writing slogans to hang on our gateways, claiming all the virtues which we wish we had but seldom live up to.

The gateway to Russia was in itself somewhat of a letdown to my flaming imagination. Next came the first Soviet frontier station a few hundred yards inside the border, the first sample of Bolshevism, the first Communist village, the first example of Red rule! I might just as well have ridden into the C.-R.I. & P. railroad station at Watertown, South Dakota, on a dull Sunday afternoon as far as outside appearances were concerned. In fact, the surrounding country made me think of exactly that place. It was such a contrast to the Polish display of militarism on the

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other side of the border that the few Red soldiers in evidence were hardly noticeable by comparison.

That was six weeks ago. I did not then dare to set down the germs of conviction which crept into me at that time for fear I would have to retract them at a later date. But I went where I chose in Russia, unguided and unmolested. No one even questioned where I was going, nor did they help or hinder my progress.

There were times when I would have welcomed some help.

I have been from Moscow to Sevastopol, through the Ukraine and Crimea to the Black Sea, Batum, Tiflis and Baku, up through the Caucasus to Rostov and Stalingrad and up the Volga valley to Nizhni-Novgorod and back to Moscow, and I have not yet seen, altogether, as much militarism in Russia as I saw from the train in one day coming through Poland. Maybe Russia intends to conquer the world for Communism at some future date, but neither the Red army nor the scant resources of the populace at this time would give one the slightest impression of any capacity in that direction. She has a long way to go before she can conquer her own soul without bothering about the salvation of anyone or anything else.

I reserve the right to change my opinion about Russian militarism at some future time but up to date it looks about as formidable for conquest as William Jennings Bryan's fifty million "Springers into Arms" of American fame.

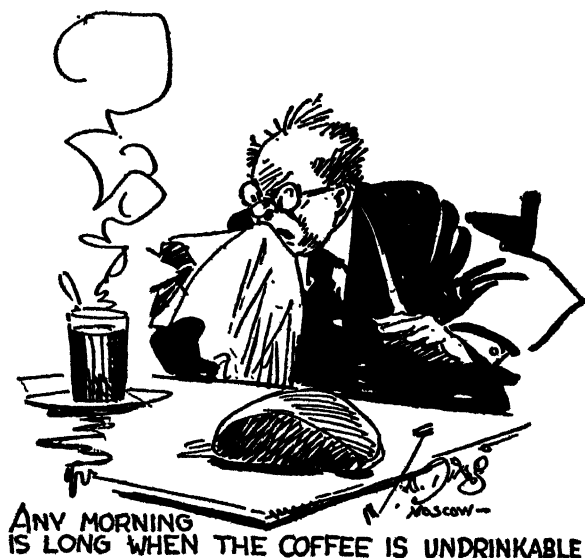
That it takes all night and half a day on a fast train to reach Moscow from the border, gives one his first idea of the tremendous distances and vast areas of this country, for Moscow lies relatively close to the western boundary of the Soviet Union. The



A RUSSIAN VILLAGE.

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journey into Russia is hardly begun when the capital of the Soviet Union is reached although it has seemed endless, due to the lax accommodations, the mystifying struggles with a strange language over minor details and the newness of it all. Any morning is long when the breakfast is inedible and the coffee undrinkable.



Russia seems much more vast than it otherwise would, owing to the succession of mornings, afternoons and evenings thus artificially lengthened.

The landscape from the car window, however, looks familiar and homey. When one gets accustomed to the sight of little groups of straw-thatched, mud-colored huts clustered together into tiny villages and the smallness of the fields instead of the broad acres and big red barns that make up our rural landscape in America, the journey to Moscow, through what is called "White" Russia, is not unlike a trip across Ohio, Illinois, Iowa, and South Dakota.



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"White" Russian farms have not yet been brought under the collectivization process which is destined later to engulf them and alter, not only the landscape, the dwellings and the size of the fields, but the whole manner of living.

The sight of well tilled fields, harvest scenes and little homes snuggling together for warmth and company always induces in me a sense of comfort and promise of well being, but in spite of this disarming view of the landscape I could not disabuse myself of the notion that surely when Moscow was reached—Moscow the capital of the U. S. S. R.; Moscow, the home of the Central Committee of the Communist party; Moscow, the meeting place of the dread International—there I would meet the Reds, real, scarlet, flaming Reds, soap-box orators astride charging steeds, at last come into their own, the ground trembling with the tread of the marching feet of the great Red army, bent on world conquest; the Kremlin, the Red Square, vibrant with the strident voiced crusades calling down maledictions on the heads of all Capitalists!

Arriving in Moscow, we took a taxi (American made) from the railroad station to the Savoy hotel. The streets were alive with crowds of perfectly harmless looking pedestrians; they filled the sidewalks and loosely spread out into the cobble-stone paved streets. Most of them carried baskets or bags and some dangled in one hand something that looked suspiciously like a bathing suit. (Second great disappointment!)

They were in pairs, in groups and singles, all intent on going some place. Except for the fact that no one was well dressed, it might have been a holiday crowd in any mid-western city in America. It was one fifth of the population of Moscow, taking its "fifth

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'day off." Not one glanced up as we passed. Traffic policemen at the corners, with very familiar gestures, held back the "proletariat" for the "privileged classes" to ride by; no glance of resentment, no shouts of derision!

) Through Red Square we drove, its wide plaza disturbed only by a few hurrying figures of men with



MY FIRST VIEW OF RED MOSCOW

brief cases looking very much like bureaucrats; then on past the buildings of the Central Committee, the fearsome G. P. U. and the Home of the International. Except for the single uniformed sentries guarding the entrances, there were no outward signs of life. We were deposited on the sidewalk in front of the hotel without a thrill—no assassinations, no bombs, no Red army, not even a dirty look.

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We lunched at the Grand hotel with government officials, as mild and courteous a group of gentlemen as ever kissed a lady's hand, and as simple and kindly as one might hope to meet. If we hadn't known they were representatives of this new Bolshevistic terror, we might easily have mistaken them for delegates from the International Rotary club.

"Why did America hate Russia and refuse her credit when she had not been a day late with a penny of her payments of interest or principal since the new government had been organized?" They had heard that "other nations were asking for moratoriums and cancellation of debts." "Then why was it that Russia, anxious to buy American machinery and willing to accept short term credits, was not a welcome customer?" "What did we think of Stalin's latest speech?" "What would America think of it? Would it help, or hurt, Russia's credit?"

Here were intelligent, reasonable men taking the absurd Soviet government seriously, planning with great hopes for the future of the Russian people. Could it be that this thing was not after all, a huge joke? The thought came to me repeatedly, as had been reported so often in America, that they were letting us see only the favorable side of Russia and just what they wanted us to see—no more. That was the answer then, was it? Well, we would see about that. They might hide their direful purposes and machinations for a day or so but we would find out the truth sooner or later, or stay in Russia until we did.

Thus began my excursion into Red Russia. Since that first day I have traveled alone, with my own non-communist interpreter, wherever I chose to go, south to the Black Sea, across the southern areas to the

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Caspian Sea, across the Steppes, up the Volga River, east to within sight of the Urals, north to the Baltic.

I have seen much to condemn, much that turned me sick with dread lest the blight which has smitten Russia should spread to other parts of the world, and I have seen some things—yes, many undertakings—astonishing in their magnitude of conception and unquestionably praiseworthy in their aims. This new Russian government in operation appears a queer mixture of grandiose idealism and hard, almost cruel, severity. The people themselves are simple and friendly but living in a meagerness and poverty of spirit and worldly goods which is strangely contradictory to the ambitious claims made to the outside world. That is the way it looks to a pilgrim from America, bent on separating the reality from the fiction of this newest experiment in social and political management of a large portion of the human family.

Going from opulent America, or even from Germany, now sick from depression, one finds the conditions surrounding the people in Russia so pitifully meagre that he is amazed to discover in them a feeling of gratitude that they are so much better off than before the Revolution. One is perpetually met with the exclamation, "Oh, but you don't know how bad it used to be in Russia."

If the present conditions in which they are living can kindle the faintest spark of hope within them, then the centuries under the Czarist regime must have been terrible. That oppression is something America knows nothing about, within her own broad borders. God forbid that she ever shall.

In this tremendous struggle of the Russians to lift themselves out of the muck, the fires of revolution have rapidly cooled. Evolution, with the aid of scientific

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knowledge, has taken its place. Slowly but surely, step by step, the organization of the Russian government has edged away from the Communistic doctrines with which the experiment was begun. One gets the impression that this desertion of the principles of Communism was not entirely voluntary but forced when the "blue print" dreams of the social theorists proved to be impractical in operation.

Habits of human nature, the inherent desire for personal advantages, the need for leaders and leadership, the wilfulness of the slothful and unintelligent and the purely mechanical devices necessary for the maintenance of a complex social organization have conspired together to break down the original conceptions of a Communistic state, as laid down by Carl Marx and redistilled by Lenin. You may call this new government in Russia a brand of Socialism, dictatorship of the proletariat, State Capitalism or the Biggest Business Trust in the world, and you will have in each case some element of support for your contentions, but by no stretch of the imagination can you call it Communism. And, whether we like it or not, the people of Russia are getting from this strange complex administration of the Soviet Government the first glimpse of hope for the future they have ever enjoyed. Nothing but complete failure can ever make them think that it is without virtue and failure seems at present extremely unlikely. We may stand back and derisively make faces at it and pooh-pooh the idea, but our scorn and ridicule will fall on deaf ears over here.

For the most part they like it and are going ahead with it and the "Russian Experiment" will have to be reckoned with for many years to come.

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The people who remain alive in Russia today are, for the most part, those who escaped the terrible slaughter of 1917 to 1921. They are of the people who spent the last 500 years living like moles and doing as they were told, and they did not find the process to their liking, nor successful, so far as their happiness and welfare were concerned. They have a few ideas of their own about their welfare which they would like to try out, and anyone who seeks to convince them they are wrong sounds to them suspiciously like the old landlord talking. You find this feeling on every hand, whether among the peasants, the factory workers or the members of the ruling party.

It is the first chance they have ever had to "run with the ball." The game is entirely new to them. They may be running in the wrong direction and headed toward their own goal line, but they'd like to see anyone try to take the ball away from them.

That all-pervading idea is at the same time their greatest strength and their greatest danger. Naturally enough, like all sandlot football players who are new at the game, they started out in total disregard of the standard rules and regulations. They were not going to have any referees, umpires, captains or quarterbacks—just a free-for-all.

But as their experiment has progressed, they have become increasingly aware of the necessity of professional coaches, team work and regulations and have gradually adopted many of the old standard rules so that, except in name, you can hardly tell it from the old game so familiar to all organized society. A graduated scale of wages, paid in cash, differentiates the skilled and unskilled labor, the executives and the engineers, the bosses and the bossed. The paths of

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the diligent and the resourceful are beginning to diverge widely from the paths of the dullard and the slothful.

Even the most casual observation in any part of Russia will disclose how very far they have left behind their original ideals of a free-for-all dead level of humanity based on absolute communism.

The members of the old ruling class are dead but new rulers are in their places. That the new ruling class has been but recently recruited from the proletariat does not appear to have altered the habits or prerogatives of the proverbial ruling class in any marked degree. They rule with an iron hand and make use of most of the practices of the old autocracy with a cruel and unrelenting severity that allows few marks of distinction from their predecessors.

What few automobiles there are in Russia the new ruling class rides in and with screeching sirens tear through the streets with amazing disregard for the pedestrians.

The new rulers sit in the private offices of the factories surrounded by secretaries, messengers and hangers-on.

What traveling is done outside of the borders of Russia, they do.

The doors of the U. S. S. R. are locked against the rest of the people. They may not go out nor come in.

What importing of foreign products is done, the ruling class does.

No Russian other than the rulers may purchase for his own use anything outside of Russia.

That door is shut tighter than a drum to the great mass of Russian citizens.

The new ruling class wears the better clothes and, deny it as they will, enjoys what special privileges there are available.

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And the old proletariat class is still under the iron thumb of the ruling class, just as much as it ever was. That they are exploited by the state instead of the individual does not seem to have altered their position in society since the revolution.

The eight-hours-a-day men in the foundries, on the farms and in the great industrial plants do jolly well as they are told or they have no roof over their heads, their bread card is taken away from them and they are given six months without visible means of support to think it over.

To be sure the new ruling class has, out of its bitter memories, made provision that if any member of the new proletariat acquits himself with distinction in his works he may be promoted and get a raise in salary. In introducing this "novel" provision into Russian life the Soviets seem to flatter themselves they have made a brand new invention.

It is one of the great gains which they assume may only be obtained through the benevolent effects of revolution and recommend it to the people of the U. S. A. But if I remember correctly America has been making use of this same device to provide its foremen, its business managers, its captains of industry and its presidential timber since 1776. America does not need a revolution in order to introduce the custom of reward and promotion for efficiency. It has been a fixed habit for years. But Russia is just as prone to overlook any good qualities in a Capitalistic state as we are to deny any virtues in the Russian experiment. In their hatred of capitalism, born of generations of Czarist oppression, the Soviets violently ridicule all of its processes and then turn around and appropriate to their uses every trick and device which make up



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the capitalistic machinery, both in government and economics.

While denying in their creed the existence of money and property rights, they plaster the walls of their banks with posters urging the public to buy U. S. S. R. 10 per cent government bonds, pointing out the virtues of saving their money for that purpose. Unless the government later plans to repudiate these bonds, it is certainly growing a new crop of capitalists.

In every government bank, as the first of the month approaches, may be seen long wooden tables surrounded by crowds of people making out their monthly income tax reports. Anyone with an income of more than 75 rubles (\$37.50) must make out a monthly income tax report and contribute, according to a sliding scale, his quota to the government treasury. Failure to do so brings a very heavy penalty.

How very much like home, only more so. What they are going to do about the matter when the industrious and the frugal have acquired enough government bonds to enable them to live on the interest, without work, is a little difficult to answer, according to the strict interpretation of Communism.

What has become of the old "Nepmen" is a natural question which comes to the mind of all those who have watched Russia's progress through these late changing years. They have vanished like the last winter snows. Only in the farthest outlying districts of Russia are any "Nepmen" still to be found.

The "Red" army is another conspicuous example of Russian equipment where the red paint has worn off and the old varnish and natural wood is showing through.

The old privates of the Czarist army, abused beyond human tolerance, browbeaten, underfed and sent into

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the trenches without arms or ammunition, weren't going to endure such a system any longer. They were going to build a new army and run it themselves—no more captains, no more colonels, no more generals or top sergeants telling them what to do and what not to do. The private was the bone and sinew of the army. He did all the fighting, therefore it was for him to say how it should be done, through a *committee* of his own.

But the old army is back at its old tricks. There are just as many shoulder straps and insignia of command, decorations and swanky uniforms as in any army and the privates still look as though they slept in their uniforms and shuffle along to barked Commands from hard-boiled top sergeants, quite as if there had never been a revolution. If the private is running the army, he doesn't look it.

To a stranger within the Russian gates it is difficult to reconcile one's preconceived ideas of Communism with the first, second and third class railroad carriages.

The first class accommodations are occupied by the favored few who wrangle with the train porters for special privileges in what looks to me like a very familiar habit in capitalistic countries. And from that down to the "hard cars" with plain wooden benches, crowded with heterogeneous humanity, bedding rolls, baskets, bags, hampers and odors, until they bulge out the windows, there seems to be the same tendency of the human animal to seek advantages for himself over his neighbor, in spite of the fact that Communism purports to have eliminated all such tendencies.

All these little errors of technique in carrying out the details of the perfect state may be due, as the Russians say, to the fact that it is all very new to them and that time will solve everything. In fact that great

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mass of the population seems to be performing under Communism just as the human family has always performed, whether under the rule of Monarchy, Democracy, Mussolini, or what you will. And when the rest of the world comes finally to the point of adjusting its relation to Russia it will have to deal with the same old human frailties, the same old human selfishness and the same relative distribution of intelligence. There is very little that is new here except on the surface.

If there is any threat to the rest of the world in the Russian experiment, it is neither in the color of its flag nor in its communism, but in the fact that it is the biggest Industrial Trust that has ever been organized in the world, with more natural resources in its treasury than any corporation that has ever existed. The control of its stock is absolutely airtight within the "Party." It is less tolerant of dissenting opinion than the Americans were of a pro-German during the late war, and it pays its help in cabbage soup and black bread. It has an interlocking board of directors and at the head of the table sits Stalin, capable, intelligent, a master of organization. He is a Georgian by birth, and the Georgians of southern Russia are notoriously shrewd traders. But there is no one in their organization who has ever had any experience as an industrial executive, and unless we have greatly exaggerated the qualifications necessary for a great business executive, this is an insurmountable handicap.

If we were to select the hundred most capable industrial executives in America, and give them the problem of making a success out of this huge Russian trust, they would find the job an extremely difficult one.

Even with complete success the so-called "Russian threat" dwindles to the vanishing point when one goes

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about Russia and sees the tremendous gap these people must span before they catch up with the rest of the world, even in the ordinary comforts of life.

Socially, culturally and economically they are starting from taw. Such universal squalor and primitive living conditions are difficult to believe until seen and endured. The quantity of materials and substance which must be poured in to supply the wants of the Russian people before they even approach the ordinary necessities of life to which the average American is accustomed seems to me an invitation to the world instead of a threat. Taken in its worst aspect, the threat to the rest of the world is one of competition with inexperienced management and inefficient but cheap labor. At its best it means setting a new place at the world family table and pulling up a chair for a rich new neighbor who has just moved in. That has been done many times in history. The readjustment has sometimes been uncomfortable but it is always possible that something may be learned from a newcomer in the international household.

I

## II

### UNDERSTANDING THE RUSSIAN PEOPLE

**T**O UNDERSTAND the Russian people, you must look at them through the screen of history which has left its indelible impression on their temperament and warped their mental attitude toward existence.

In order that we may get a better understanding of the fear that pervades Russia it is only necessary to



look at one of our near neighbors. France has been invaded twice by Germany in recent generations and is scared to death. Her hysterical fear of further attack has made of her at this time the most hazardous impediment in the path of world peace.

Russia has been invaded thirty-four times. She has been run over so often that she trembles and starts to howl every time she hears a distant siren. The last invasion was that of the so-called "White" army, made up largely of troops from her recent allies. That invasion was so recent that its terrors are still fresh in the minds of the people. Russia has been swept by hordes of invaders from every quarter of the compass and little eddies of distinct racial strains which took root during foreign occupation remain to mark the flood of plunderers that later receded or were driven back by a new invasion from another quarter.

## UNDERSTANDING RUSSIAN PEOPLE

Tartars, Mongolians, Persians, Slavs, Norsemen, Swedes, Finns, Germans, Arabs, Greeks, Turks and French have all left their telltale marks on the facial and physical characteristics and the dialects.

There are railway stations in southern Russia where they have to label their ticket windows and signs in the station waiting rooms in four languages, using almost as many different alphabets.

It has been the happy hunting ground for marauders. Add to that the generations of Czarist rule wherein the populace groveled in serfdom and could look to no one for a friendly turn, and you begin to understand the furtive suspicion and animal-like stolidity which marks the Russian proletariat.

Browbeat or threaten them and they will freeze into the stubbornness of solid granite. But with the offer of a cigaret and a smile you can melt them into the most friendly beings you ever met.

They do not quarrel or fight. They simply close up like clams. You may see a half dozen heated imbroglios in France in one evening, but you won't see one in Russia in a month's travel. Attack seems to have been left out or beaten out of the Russian temperament.

The entire bag of tricks of Russian combative technique seems to be wrapped up in the one quality of silent, stubborn resistance.

It is this fact which makes the much advertised likelihood of a Russian military offensive seem doubtful. But in defense they will burn their own cities, destroy their crops, slaughter their cattle and starve themselves in order that the enemy may not find subsistence.

Military authorities admit that no modern army could conquer Russia. It could not live on the land

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long enough to consolidate any military victory it might win, nor subdue the stolid spirit of the Russian peasant.

Whatever one may think of the new Russian government, he cannot travel long in the outlying districts without gaining a great sympathy and friendliness for the people themselves.

Merry laughter lurks just under the surface of their twinkling eyes, and not until you have been among them for some time do you realize that the reason they do not laugh more often is the sad fact that they haven't much to laugh at.

They never had much time under the Czarist regime, between wars, the landlords and the tax collectors, to exercise this national instinct, and the wonder is that it hasn't been ground out of them long ago. Now it is the weird gyrations of the Soviets that sobers them.

How a people could go through the terrible years of the recent revolution and come out with their present smiling hope for the future can be explained only on the ground of their childlike simplicity.

They have suffered so bitterly that almost anything that promises even a stepmother's affection seems to them a hopeful and soothing condition. That is why they accept, so tolerantly, the severe and ironlike rule of the new regime. They have reacted to the slightest sign of friendliness as children rebound to a smile of reconciliation after punishment.

As I traveled about and found on every hand this same evidence of simple, generous friendliness, I was repeatedly seized with a panic of futile exasperation that the people of this world should go on beating their brains out against a solid wall of ignorance and misunderstanding about each other.

## UNDERSTANDING RUSSIAN PEOPLE

I reviewed again the many monumental canards about Russia built upon half truths that have been circulated and believed in America and recalled that we are now holding out the cup of sustenance to, and praising for their good qualities, the German people, whom only a few years ago we slaughtered



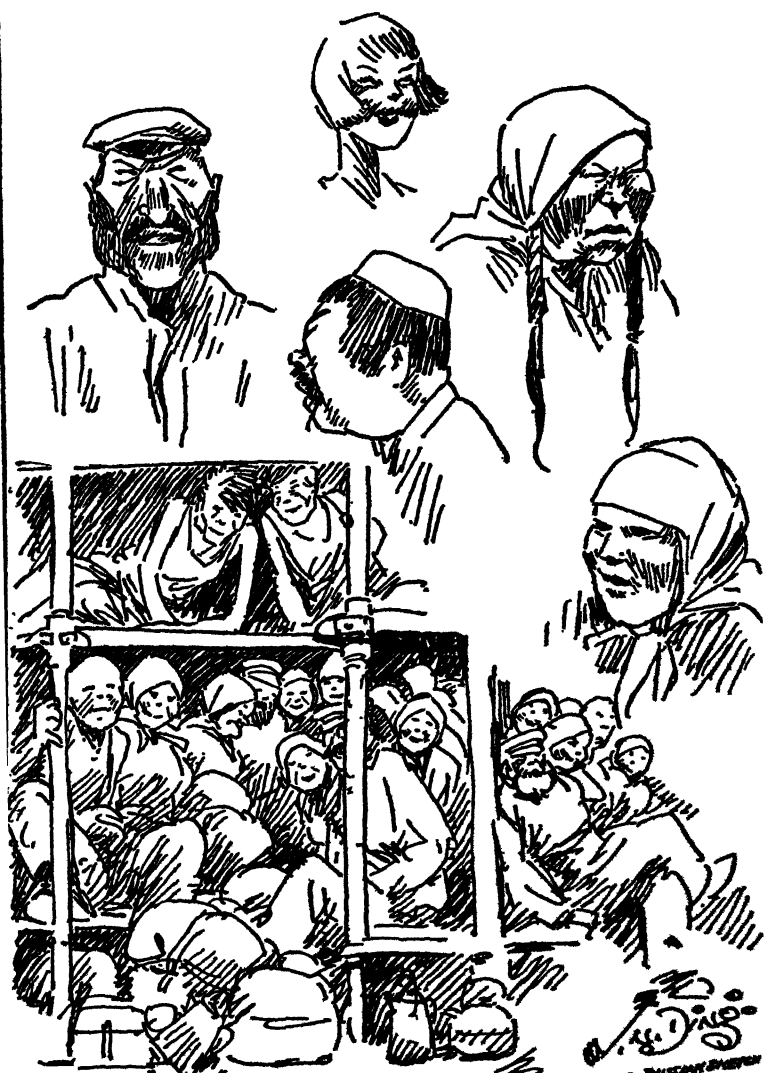
by the millions in open warfare. It is going to take many years to overcome the pernicious misinformation about Russia that exists in America and the retaliatory falsehoods that have been told in Russia about America.

Travel in Russia is no luxurious jaunt where one lounges on doily covered upholstery with fat pillows at his back and a solicitous porter to bring him a tall glass of iced orange juice while he gazes out of plate glass windows a yard wide.

Space to sit down on a wooden bench in a crowded "hard car" is often a luxury. Recalling the times without number that the Russian occupants of a crowded car have looked up with a smile and made room for me as I appeared in their doorway, about to add to their discomforts, makes me smile at the allegations of greed and cruelty which have been fastened on to these simple people.



## DING GOES TO RUSSIA



IN A HARD CAR IN SOUTHERN  
CAUCASUS

Ding  
FROM A RUSSIAN JOURNALS  
BOOK - 1901

## UNDERSTANDING RUSSIAN PEOPLE

The intimacies of travel in crowded cars are like the intimacies of a camping trip—they bring out all the unsuspected qualities of human nature in your companions.

Either you end by wanting to murder them or you are fast friends for life. With me in Russia it was the



latter. If they saw me trying to dig a hole with my knife in the stubborn tin top of a little can of pickled fish, someone was sure to dip into his commodious roll of duffle and extricate an antiquated can opener and, with shy pride in his unusual possession, offer to do the job for me.

If they possessed a plate it was brought forth and placed on my knee to reinforce my leaky collapsible drinking cup. Time after time, after there had been a general exodus of passengers from the car in which I was riding, my interpreter would surprise me by returning with good wishes for a pleasant journey left by departing travelers with whom I had barely exchanged glances of greeting.

They are smilingly generous and cordial and they refuse to accept anything in return for favors.

In fact, my native interpreter refused to allow me to offer any exchange for such courtesies. Kindnesses were kindnesses in Russia and not supposed to be paid for, my interpreter informed me with some heat, I thought, after my repeated failures to take a hint.

Ah, yes, the offer of a cigaret—that was a symbol of cordiality, but even that must not be done in the spirit of paying for a favor.

## DING GOES TO RUSSIA

The only time I was able to return any of the many favors offered me was after a plague of mosquitoes had suddenly swarmed into the crowded car in which we were riding.

They were so thick they obscured the lights from the little tin candlestick lanterns which glowed along the corridor, and they covered the shaved heads of the Russian men with itching welts. Being cautious of infectious fever germs in southern Caucasus, I had produced a bottle of iodine and with a water-color brush was painting my "bites."

This was something new to my Russian traveling companions and whether they knew anything about the therapeutics of the operation or not, it tickled them to have their welts painted.

The operation greatly shortened a hot, sleepless night, and turned the morning into uproarious laughter when daylight revealed the leopard spotted carful of passengers.

The difference in the racial strains which makes Russia as variegated in physical and facial characteristics as the congress of the league of nations might easily be suspected of making an equally variegated mixture of temperaments.

But something, perhaps the common experiences of their national life, the same fears, the same struggles and the same climatic and geographic conditions, has induced in them all about the same kindness of spirit, at least to the stranger traveling in their midst. This holds pretty generally true throughout the great western section of Russia, from the western border to the Ural Mountains. Russia has its "hill billies" to be sure. They live in the regions segregated by mountains and geographic hazards to communication.

## UNDERSTANDING RUSSIAN PEOPLE

In Tiflis and the extreme southeast where Persians, Armenians, Turks, Arabs and Tartars have brought their native customs with them and retained them, their appearances looked formidable and aromatic. Maybe their hearts, too, are tender. I did not feel the urge then to investigate too closely.

They do not look nor act like the rest of the people in Russia (it was at Tiflis that I paid 40 rubles [\$20] an hour for a ride in a 1913 model automobile) but it would not be fair to cite these people as characteristically Russian.

If these statements seem contradictory to some of the views I have expressed elsewhere on the discomforts of travel in the outlying districts of Russia, it is due to my failure to make clear the difference between the people themselves and their utter lack of observation of the first rules of sanitation.

The discomforts of travel in Russia are bad enough, but they would be unbearable if it were not for the sweetness of character of the common Russian people.

### III

#### COLLECTIVIZATION

A LONG, double line of aging men, peasants evidently, judging by their dress, untrimmed hair and full beards, came toward me with heads bent forward and dragging steps, along a dusty road.

Their feet were wrapped in woven wicker moccasins made from what looked like split willow shavings, held on by windings of rags which extended half way up to the knees and bound in the lower extremities of their baggy trousers. Their gait could not have been more convictlike if the ankle chains which seemed to impede their steps had been real instead of imaginary.

A Red guard walked at the head of the column and two guards brought up the rear. One of the old men was sobbing quietly, like a lonesome child. Another one I recognized as the old peasant I had recently watched from the deck of the Volga boat as he sat on the planks of the landing pier and reverently crossed himself before tasting the hunk of black bread he had dug from his little scarf full of personal possessions.

They were all gaunt and tall, much taller than the average Russian left after the Revolution. Their homespun blouses and caps and their stature indicated that they were of a different class from the workers of the city through which they had trudged.

It took only one guess to know who they were. "Kulaks." Those more thrifty and prosperous farmers who had accumulated, by their industry and frugality,

## COLLECTIVIZATION

more land, more cattle and more personal property than their neighbors and who used hired help to work their farms.

Their virtues had been their destruction. When the areas in which they had lived were forced into collectivization by the agents of the Soviet government they had rebelled and refused to turn over their possessions to the state and go in on an equal footing with the lazy peasant who had loafed all his life and turned over nothing at all.

They were now on their way to chop wood in Siberia or some equally safe place away from home where their influence would not upset the works. The government was having a hard enough time keeping the more docile peasants in the collectivized harness without the open rebellion of these wise old heads of the communities.

Dispossessed, torn from their families and the neighborhood friends where they had spent their entire lives, they were being punished by exile for the little hard earned success they had made out of their lives. At their age no punishment could have been more cruel.

This is the sad side of the picture which has transformed the sleepy farm lands of Russia into a bustling, machine-cultivated and machine harvested, collectivized, modernized industry that has shocked the wheat producing farmers of the world into a conniption fit.

It is dismal to reflect that if the mechanization of the Russian wheat farms had not disturbed prices, these same persecuted Kulaks could have been drawn and quartered and fed to the ravens without a peep of sympathy from the now outraged agriculturists of the world.

Of course it is folly to expect too much consistency from the human family but the fact remains that

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## DING GOES TO RUSSIA



WHAT HAPPINESS THEY ARE RECEIVING IN RUSSIA IS BOUGHT AT A TERRIBLE PRICE.

## COLLECTIVIZATION

the most sickening sight I saw in all Russia was that shuffling column of simple old farmers being led away to spend their last years in friendless exile.

It is difficult to find an excuse which can justify the existence of any form of government that needs to resort to such cruelty to sustain its policies. Nothing that I may say below about collectivized farming can alter my feelings about that cruel picture which still haunts my mind.

Back on the old farmlands from whence these Kulaks had come, the whole life and landscape have completely changed. The little narrow fields which made the landscape into a patchwork quilt are gone. In their place are broad 100-acre fields planted to single crops. The plodding pair of bent peasants who used to harvest their little patches with sickle and wooden rake have been replaced by tractor-drawn reapers or combines.

Rows of peasants, in the place of pairs, now glean the fields. And instead of living in low thatched villages they dwell in long, low wooden barracks, grouped around the new pine board administration buildings of the new collectivized management.

The peasants rise, eat, work and attend meetings at the command of the manager of the farms. Independence is gone out of their existence. They do the jobs they are assigned to do. A "committee" is supposed to dictate the policies of the farm, but, like the factories, the farms are rigidly managed by the Party manager. The committees remain as a matter of form, but they are functionless except in incidental matters.

How do the peasants like it? They "have to like it." Anyone who has ever seen a column of Kulaks led away to exile under guard knows enough not to say any-

## DING GOES TO RUSSIA

thing about whether he likes it or not. Any opinion I may have formed was therefore not the result of any verbal expression which came from the peasants themselves. One could only judge from appearances. Collectivization was forced on them in the face of a bitter hostility which was almost unanimous.

The peasants, like all the rest of the Russian people, are prohibited from owning land. It all belongs to the state. The idea of giving up their own land to the common cause violated every instinct which had been inbred in them. That procedure of tearing up the great Russian peasantry by the roots is the saddest and bitterest spot in the history of the Soviet dictatorship. That they have succeeded in enforcing collectivization throughout 90 per cent of their farm areas is an index to the steel-like grip with which the Stalin government holds the nation.

The older people, who saw their life's savings and all their possessions wiped out with one blow, will never get over it. The youth, with their lives all before them, see in the new order a hope for better living conditions and a chance to lift themselves out of the mire which has engulfed the peasant population for generations.

It is among the younger people that the happier side of the state controlled farms is to be found. Unquestionably they are pleased with themselves and the dent they have made in the universe. They like the conviviality of the large groups working together. They like the prospect of some day being able to drive a tractor and they like the idea of a communal dining hall and kitchen, with no more dishwashing and kitchen drudgery.

Generally speaking the collectivized farms are, where well managed, proving successful, and the crop increase

## COLLECTIVIZATION

has melted some of the bitterness even in the older people. Where poor management has resulted in crop disaster there are bitter, subterranean rumblings which will have to be crushed out with another treatment of the steam roller.

American farmers who think they would like to test the Communist experiment had better try a diet of cabbage soup, eaten with a wooden spoon from a tin basin, with a hunk of black bread for ballast, for a few weeks before advocating the change. It may be an improvement to the Russians but to the American farmer it would be an awful disappointment.

While prowling around the countryside in the Ukraine one day I espied a peasant woman over in a field, busily stirring something in a large, black iron kettle hung over a fire. If they had anything to make soap from in Russia the scene would have suggested that. Soap being out of the question in Russia I had to go over and investigate.

It was soup. I should have guessed it! Everything you see cooking in Russia is soup—or tea. This was farm soup, for the workers in the fields. It was made of barley flour and water, seasoned with dill and with a quart of sunflower seed oil added as a substitute for meat.

Presiding over the big iron kettle was a sweet faced little Ukrainian peasant woman, with twinkling eyes, kerchiefed head, faded cotton dress but as clean as though she had just come out of the laundry. She paused in her stirring of the broth, and smiled as we approached.

Was that soup good? Certainly it was good. Hadn't she, herself, made it? Evidently we were not aware that she was the best cook in the neighborhood.



THE MORE PLEASANT SIDE OF COLLECTIVIZED FARMING.

## COLLECTIVIZATION

Her reply was made in laughing good nature and with as fine an impromptu pantomime of mock shocked dignity, as one could wish to see. Her merriment was irresistible and our appreciation was vociferous. Cordial friendship was established from that moment on. It takes just about that long anywhere in Russia.

Would we like to taste the soup? Sure! Did we like it? The best soup we ever tasted! (I would have said so if it had been rat poison. I don't remember ever tasting dishwater but I imagine, properly diluted, that the soup tasted something like it.) Well, if we liked it now, just wait until it was finished. She hadn't put the dumplings in yet.

We followed her glance to a plank where a mound of dough awaited her attention. She pounded it out flat with a wooden paddle, cut it into squares about the way you would cut up a pan of homemade fudge, and dumped it into the kettle. We watched to see the little slugs of pasty dough expand into our idea of what a dumpling should be. They never did.

The sound of a distant gong came to us over the hill and a few minutes later the cohort of harvesters, more than half of them girls and women, with large wooden pitchforks and rakes slung across their shoulders, came into view.

Our hesitancy about remaining for fear we might embarrass them at their frugal meal vanished as the group in front caught sight of us and quickened their pace. On they came, bright eyed with curiosity, and laughing. They gathered around us and all chatted at once.

If we were curious to see what they were like they were doubly so about us. Did we come in that automobile? (A decrepit old flivver!) Could they look at it?

## DING GOES TO RUSSIA

Did we care if they sat in the seat? Did we own it? No, but at home, in America, we owned two. Oh! Did we come from America? (Feverish increase of interest while they left the automobile to again center their attention on us.)

Were our clothes factory made American clothes? Did everyone in America have clothes like ours?—Yes, and automobiles, too—Not really? Farmers in America didn't have automobiles did they? No, they didn't believe that. Their farm manager had told them that American farmers left their machinery out in the fields to rust. Surely if they didn't have places to keep their machinery under cover they couldn't have automobiles.

The soup was ready. We looked again to see if the dumplings had "raised." They hadn't. Everyone was given a tin wash basin full and a wooden spoon, we among them. I didn't dare refuse and besides while I had tasted the soup I was still curious about the dumplings.

They were about as light and fluffy as a nice big mouthful of warm tar. What I did with my soup I hope that pleasant little cook never finds out. Whatever we thought about the soup, it was quite evident that the hungry field hands liked it. They drained the last drop, "dumplings" and all, from that huge kettle before they had finished. Chunks of black bread with the soup was all they had for lunch. They said it was fine to have someone making hot soup for them when they were out working in the fields.

In the former days they used to go out to their individual grain patches and work all day long with only the black bread they had brought with them from home.

Here again, as in the cities, the women had all the spirit and the men none. They were, with a few excep-

## COLLECTIVIZATION

tions, all young. None over middle age. That they were having a good time was quite apparent. I went later to their new collectivized village. It was not yet done. The central hall and machine shop were finished and a few low frame houses built to accommodate four families, two rooms for each family.

Scaffoldings and brick foundations, without cellars, showed where more houses were to be. A little way off were the straw-thatched huts of the old village, soon to be completely abandoned.

It was quite evident that whatever sorrow and hostility had crushed them in the beginning, they had quite forgotten their troubles in the keen anticipation of occupying their new quarters. I found it hard to reconcile in my mind the picture of that shuffling column of Kulaks, some of them perhaps from this same neighborhood, sobbing, utterly broken in spirit, being led off into exile, with this unquestionably happy picture of those who were left behind.

It is one of those contradictory situations which characterizes all Russia today. Every hopeful and happy side has its black pit of suffering and cruelty to offset it. Surely what happiness they are receiving in Russia, is bought at a terrible price.



## IV

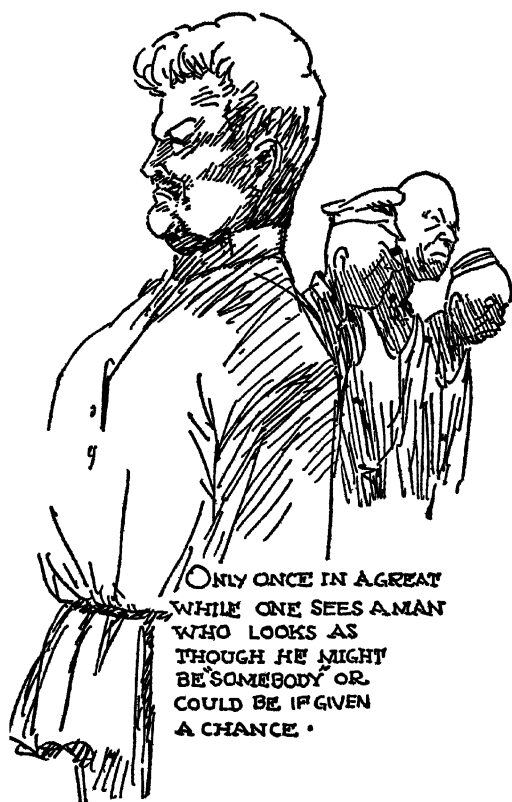
### RUSSIA'S YOUTH

THERE are no old people left in Russia and throughout the Soviet Union the devastating effect of the firing squad upon the men of the country is startlingly evident. It is as if in a great forest all the big timber had been cut down and there were left standing only the scrubs, the saplings and the underbrush.

One looks through the passing crowds in a vain search for men with the appearance and bearing of those who, if the occasion required, might carry off a load of responsibility intelligently, or be fitted for executive management. Perhaps it is their shaved heads, or maybe it is the unfamiliar racial characteristics that make the men who are left in Russia look so incompetent. But, after keeping score while in the cities, the railroad coaches and on my swing around the country with very meagre averages resulting, I came to the conclusion that the blight of the Revolution had taken a very heavy toll of the intelligent, as well as of Royal sympathizers.

Only now and then was I able to find a man who stepped off with an air of confidence, who had a large, well modeled head and the keen eye and countenance which one associates with a well trained mind. So completely devoid is Russia of this type that, on those rare occasions when such a figure did appear, I could not help wondering what secret lay behind his escape from the firing squad.

## RUSSIA'S YOUTH



ONLY ONCE IN A GREAT  
WHILE ONE SEES A MAN  
WHO LOOKS AS  
THOUGH HE MIGHT  
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## DING GOES TO RUSSIA

Admitting that one may easily be misled by the outward appearance of men, there was no mistaking the slouch, the slovenly walk and the dull interest which generally characterized the men of Russia. You never see one who walks off as if he owned the world.

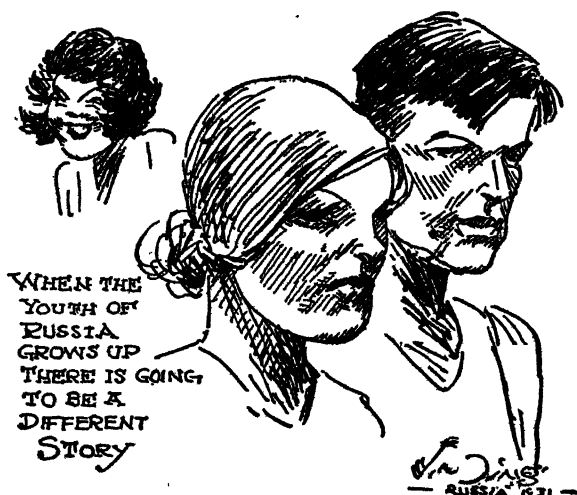
This was all the more noticeable because the women of Russia are so fine, so sturdy and so alive. There is no "dumb, driven cattle" air about the Russian women. They all give the appearance of having something definitely in mind that they are going to do and they are all busy at it. Busy with a courageous heart and a twinkle in their eyes. There are not many of the tall, vampish Russian princess type left, but even with them the exodus and the firing squad dealt much more liberally than with the men.

If it were not for the probability that the Revolutionary executioners took a much heavier toll of the men than the women it would be impossible to explain how such a wonderfully fine race of women and such a scrubby bunch of men could have been hatched in the same incubator.

More complete evidence against the firing squad is furnished by the youth of Russia. The boys now in their early twenties were too young at the time of the Revolution to have ideas that, for the safety of the cause, needed to be erased by the firing squad. The ranks of the youth in Russia today are filled with strikingly fine personalities, handsome heads and bodies. All the qualities which one looked for and failed to find in the older men are present in the youth and boyhood of the country. Seeds from the old stock that is dead have taken root and are going to bloom in a few years.

## RUSSIA'S YOUTH

If Russia can hold to her course until this new generation comes into its own there need be no fear for the stability of Russia. Give them half a chance and Russia will be led out of the despondent morass of medieval civilization and poverty by the rising generation, in a very short period of years.



Now, for the first time in Russian history, all the youth are being given a general education. It is compulsory. They are put through a rigorous training in physical culture and the nation's scant supplies of milk and cream, butter and fruit juices are drained to build healthy bodies for the children. Children's playgrounds and athletic fields, where supervised sports are in almost constant progress, may be found in nearly all the cities of any size in the country.

That is one instance where no one can find fault with the new Russian regime. Except for the implanting of fear and hatred of the rest of the world, through their poisonous propaganda, they are doing a fine job with the youth of the country.

## DING GOES TO RUSSIA

Like the stories of the destruction of the Russian churches, which sounded as though there wasn't one left and led one to surmise that any little boys who wanted to go to Sunday school would be lined up against the wall and shot, the reports of the complete breaking up of family life in Russia have been grossly exaggerated.

Community nurseries, supervised play and organized children's "pioneer" societies have taken a large place in the lives of the children but these things are substitutes for pure neglect and hours that were wasted before their advent.



THE DESTRUCTION OF FAMILY LIFE  
SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN SOMEWHAT  
EXAGGERATED !

There seems to be plenty of family life left, if my observations are at all accurate. The children seem still to occupy a large place in the homes I visited. Strings of them still dangle back of parents as they wander through the parks on their days off and when one strays from the fold and is lost it seems to cause just as much consternation as ever.

## RUSSIA'S YOUTH

On a visit to a state chicken farm in the Ukraine where I wandered one day, I stole a look into the big veranda of the old landlord's mansion, which now served as a home for the manager and his assistants. The floor seemed to be alive with babies and children of varying ages in the charge of a buxom young Russian



woman, who looked as though she could feed the world, seated among them and administering to their needs.

"Ah," said I, "this must be one of your collectivized farm nurseries I have read so much about."

"Not at all. Those are my own," replied the farm manager with evident fatherly pride.

## DING GOES TO RUSSIA

There certainly was no lack of family life there nor anywhere in Russia, so far as I could discover. And so another of my preconceived opinions, formed from the sensational reports of Russian marvels, went a-glimmering.

In those families where there is a tendency to neglect the children the new provisions are a great benefit, but with all the boastful tales of efficiency in the child welfare department of the Soviet government, the facilities and technique are primitive compared with America's work in the same direction.

If more American citizens took enough interest in the supervised recreation organizations to be aware of the work that is being done here at home, they would not be so awestruck by the simple experiments being tried out for the first time in Russia.

I was often struck with the remarkable absence of children from the downtown areas of the cities. There were no "drugstore cowboys" lining the sidewalks at the busy street corners. There were no groups of giggling young girls with frizzled hair and spike-heeled shoes out looking for a ride. Perhaps that was because there are no candy stores, soda fountains or sport roadsters to invite the young folks, but there is another possible explanation.

Russian leaders of today, never having had any chance in their youth, are trying to make sure that the new generation of children will have everything. If they are not careful they will have the Russian Youth hating "pep meetings" as much as I hated Wednesday night prayer meeting. Anything that is overdone, even for "your own good," takes on the atmosphere of medicine, after a while, and the Russian youth is "organized" to the saturation point. They have their

## RUSSIA'S YOUTH

guilds with meetings and talks on self control, loyalty to the government, alcoholism and the joys of a virtuous life. They follow, religiously, their lessons in calisthenics and setting-up exercises. They listen to long lectures on mechanization, electrification and the life history of Lenin. They are led around in groups through miles of museum exhibits by lecturing guides, and anyone who has ever taken a "Cook's Tour" knows how soon that wears down even the most heroic soul.

The fact is, the average Russian child doesn't have time to walk the streets, even if he had the inclination. Everything is new for them and just now the novelty of it all is keeping them very much interested. It's going to be a great life, if they don't weaken.

There is one certain fact which is bound to result from this concentrated attention to the education and training of the new generations. When they grow up there is going to be no small clique of men enforcing their ideas of government and social management upon the great predominating majority of people who think and know their own rights. The world may look for a change in the Russian government at just about that time.;





## V

### IN THE WAKE OF REVOLUTION

**B**OLSHEVISM cures everything. If you are breaking out in a red rash or are afflicted with conservatism, one dose of Russia will make you well.

Every American ought to make a trip to Russia at least once just to see what happens when the upper crust of society gets too heavy and overbearing and the proletariat rises up and gives it the axe. They have done a complete job of it over here and the evidence is most plentiful and convincing.

Russia is being run today by the 160,000,000 that are left after the housecleaning and it is surprising to note how little the old overlords are missed by the remaining populace. I don't think you'd like it but the object lesson would be good for whatever ails you.

Not that America has even approached the conditions which gave rise to the great upheaval in Russia, but the best guarantee that she never will approach a state of social injustice or invite such a cataclysm would be that every American could see and understand what it has done to this country.

A certain generosity of spirit is engendered in even the most conceited men's souls when they discover how well this world can get along without them. And as to the utopian reformers, it is equally beneficial to learn how many holes were poked in their favorite theories when put to the test of practical application.

## IN THE WAKE OF REVOLUTION

It might be a great saving, in the long run, if the United States government would organize excursions and send a few thousand of its befuddled citizens over purely for educational purposes, for it isn't Bolshevism the world needs to worry about nearly so much as it is the corrosive poison of revolution, born of too heavy a hand on the part of the overlords and the hasty cure-alls that are advocated by the hot headed reformers.

Bolshevism is now just a name without any corporal body. All that is left of that mad dog is the tail and its path of destruction. No one who has seen Russia today, be he laborer or capitalist, could possibly want the same thing to happen in this country. But Bolshevism, or something equally mad, was inevitable and always will be the inevitable result of systematic and blind social injustice. The longer the pent-up rage of the people is kept bottled the more violent will be the explosion when it comes. The destruction that was wrought by the Red Revolution is greater than one hundred years of reconstruction can replace.

The swivel chairs back of the big desks in Moscow, made vacant by the firing squads or a speedy exit across the border, are now occupied by men who used to do nothing but obey orders, take off their hats and get down on their knees to the aristocracy or suffer a chain in Siberia.

The new banker looks like the man who used to take care of the furnace and probably is. The bank cashier might easily still be mistaken for the scrubwoman and I'm sure some of the clerks in charge of foreign exchange must have been night watchmen before the revolution. There are other qualities besides looks which go to confirm the above impressions. I have nothing against night watchmen, scrubwomen or furnace men

## DING GOES TO RUSSIA

but they certainly make funny bankers when they begin.

Every traveler in Russia becomes aware, the moment he wanders from the tender care of the "Intourist" travelers agency of the Soviet government, that something devastating has happened to the management of the magnificent old hotels, which still bear external evidence of former grandeur.



*I HAVE NOTHING AGAINST SCRUB WOMEN AND NIGHT WATCHMEN, BUT  
THEY MAKE FUNNY BANKERS WHEN THEY FIRST START OUT—*

Within the portals of all the hotels I visited outside of Moscow and Leningrad, there was ample evidence contributing to the conclusion that the new hotel manager had, under the old regime, been the man who met the trains, or was third assistant porter, and all the former chambermaids and plumbers who used to care for the internal arrangements must have been requisitioned for high executive positions elsewhere for there is no sign that anyone with experience or knowledge of his duties remains within hailing distance of

IN THE WAKE OF REVOLUTION



SOMETHING DEVASTATING HAS HAPPENED TO THE HOTELS IN  
OUTLYING DISTRICTS.

## DING GOES TO RUSSIA

the vicinity. I may be finicky but I never could get used to having dinner served by a man in his undershirt.

These facts are much more exasperating to the American tourist than they are to the Russians, who seem entirely oblivious to any shortcomings and who are as uncritical of the flies and dirty table service as they are of their own uncouth appearance and manners. In the hotels, anywhere except Moscow and Leningrad, you and your luggage get what repose as is afforded by a room so devoid of care and equipment that a 25-cent "flop house" accommodation in the slums of New York would seem like a sanitary haven of rest by comparison.

It has become apparent, after several such weird experiences in many hotels throughout Russia, that there remain no people in the land who demand more. This new level seems quite as it should be to them. In fact they are quite delighted with the way they are handling matters and are having the time of their young lives running the big show. Anyone who says the Russians, generally speaking, are not pleased with themselves and their new jobs has never seen them, or else has looked at them with blind eyes.

The halls of the great mansions, once thickly carpeted and whispering with the muffled steps of liveried butlers and blasé aristocracy, are now barren of furniture and draperies and they echo with the clatter and clump of the proletariat who have moved in from their basement lodgings, bringing their homely paraphernalia and odors with them.

The private gardens and broad estates, now weed-grown and with grass uncut, have been opened to the public. Old palaces have been turned into workmen's clubs. Private mansions are now sanatoriums—soiled

## IN THE WAKE OF REVOLUTION



I MAY BE  
FINICKY, BUT  
I NEVER COULD GET QUITE USED TO A  
HOTEL WAITER IN AN UNDERSHIRT—

## DING GOES TO RUSSIA

and smudgy and full of flies, to be sure, but still sanatoriums. The long, sandy beaches of the Moskva River, which makes a half moon turn around the capital city, daily swarm with bathers and the families of the workers on their "fifth day off." And as I watched these people day after day and looked to see if any one among them showed signs of loneliness for the absent aristocracy, who had formerly kept these facilities pretty much to themselves, I found none.

The one thing these people never had before was personal liberty. They used to live in basements and cellars. They have now come out into the sunshine. All other considerations in their minds are submerged by this great new privilege. There are many things which the Russian populace grievously mourn the lack of but the list does not, so far as I could discern, include a landlord.

All these new found liberties are pointed out to the visitor as being the direct and benevolent result of revolution, and the guides who have you in tow are sure to ask you, sooner or later, when America is going to have one so that her people may enjoy privileges like these. The question always sounds so strange when you first hear it that until you have had the experience repeated a number of times you are likely to credit your guide with a sense of humor which he does not deserve. The question is asked in perfect sincerity and is an indication of how completely ignorant the Russian people are of the conditions possible under a Republican form of government.

If the American public, working men, bourgeois and all the rest, had no more comforts and no more facilities for recreation and amusement than are provided

## IN THE WAKE OF REVOLUTION

for the people in Russia today we certainly would have a revolution the first Sunday afternoon the people fared forth to enjoy themselves and found nothing whatever to do but walk back and forth on dirt sidewalks, and no refreshments other than lukewarm, sweetened water, with much less qualifications for being called a drink than circus lemonade at a county fair.

There are so few amusement facilities of any kind in all Russia that they narrowly escape total extinction. A merry-go-round, shoot-the-chutes, or ferris wheel would be wild debauchery, if they had any, but only once did I come across such provisions. There was a small amusement park in Moscow that would rate about the equal of one of the wagon carnivals that travel with the country fairs at home.

If there is a moving picture show it will turn out to be not entertainment but a propaganda movie, showing the great benefits of hard work and loyalty to the Party government.

I attended many and the audience seemed about as enthusiastic over them as the American movie fan is over the series of advertisements that are sometimes shown in rural movies between features. There are no board walks or rows of refreshment pavilions with music, wheelchairs, ponies to ride and inviting displays of food and drink; or rows of tables and chairs overlooking the festive scenery.

An inventive mind and a little energy on the part of some individual in Russia today could reap a harvest of patronage if he would build even one of the most primitive amusement devices common to American parks, and what a 10 cent store would do in the midst of this crying need for playthings is beyond estimate.



## DING GOES TO RUSSIA

(You can't even buy a red ribbon to tie in your hair.) The individual initiative which might provide such simple diversions, however, has been stamped out by the theory that all such undertakings shall be the province of the "State." The result is that Russia is as barren of amusements as a monastery.

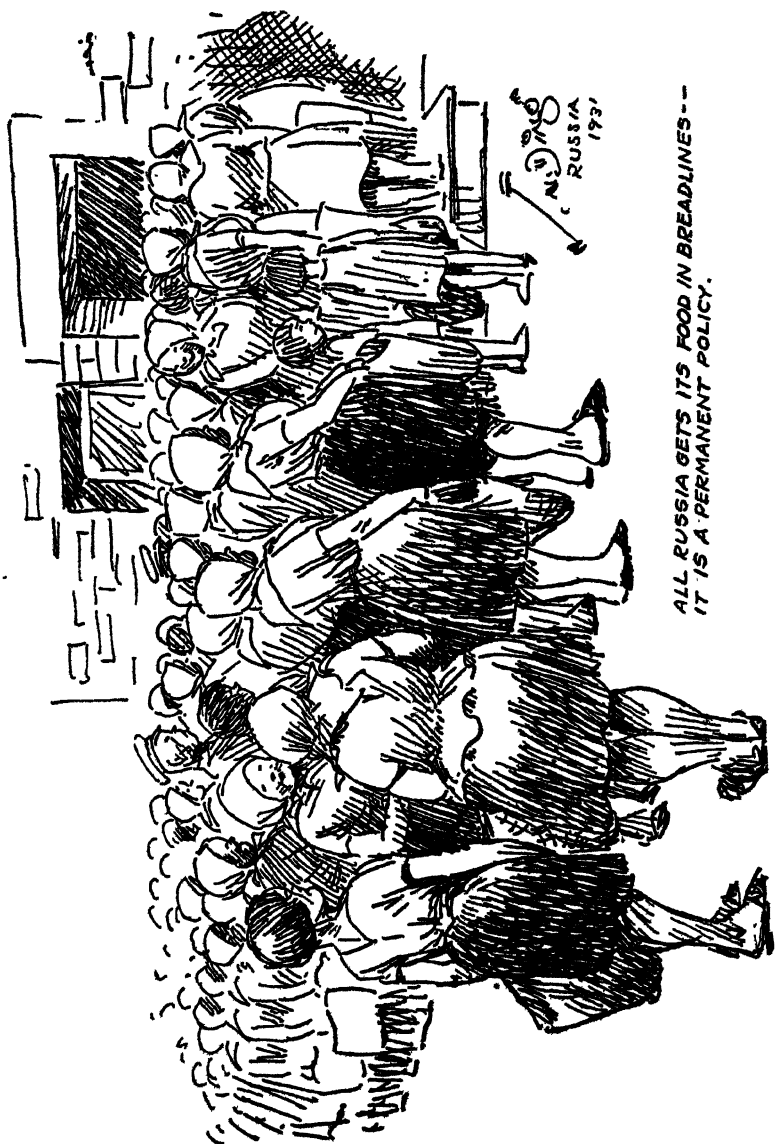
There are no automobiles in which the people might go to the country for a picnic in the woods, and when the new industrial program has provided the automobiles, one wonders how a picnic will be possible when the food supply is a government monopoly and is served from communal kitchens.

The one extravagance which the Russian government has indulged in to amuse the populace on their holidays is to liberally plaster all the sightly places in the cities and parks with large, painted billboards and diagrammatic charts in wild colors showing the horrors of capitalism and the glorified Russian workmen in heroic combat against capitalistic devils.

When the Russian "reveler" becomes tired of looking at these dismal posters he may sit on a crude wooden park bench and listen to raucous voiced radio amplifiers, mounted on tall poles in all public gathering places, which pour forth a perpetual stream of propaganda on the beneficent effect of hard and industrious work for the Soviet state.

To an American with memories of well dressed holiday crowds jamming the amusement parks and public playgrounds at home, hamburger sandwiches, ice cream cones, hot buttered popcorn, long avenues of refreshment pavilions and amusement palaces, music, dancing, roller skating, and country roads lined with automobiles parked while the families picnic, that question oft repeated by the guides about the probable

## IN THE WAKE OF REVOLUTION



## DING GOES TO RUSSIA

date of the American Revolt keeps returning to haunt the mind and reiterate the wish that all Americans might see Russia as it is today and that all Russians might see America, and each stop talking the bally rot which both are so fond of repeating about the other.

I am told that during the winter season the populace has access to the finest of operas, ballets and concert artists. This may be entirely true but my optimism about the quality of their entertainments has been sadly bruised by the universal disappointment I experienced when I attended their over-advertised summer shows. They seemed about as crude as the home talent entertainments at an ice cream festival in a country village at home.

America, at its very worst, cannot realize the barren, desolate waste of Russian existence today. Looking at the hundred years which must pass before Russia can recover the loss entailed in the destructive revolution, the conviction grows that there must be some better way than revolution to cure the ills of capitalism.

Even on rare occasions like the present, when there is great privation in America, and the soup kitchen is resorted to for the feeding of the destitute and the unemployed, shameful and inexcusable as it is, it cannot be compared to the universal and hopeless feeling of abject dependence upon the state for food and lodging, which one observes everywhere here in Russia.

There seems to be no room left here for individual resourcefulness. All personal ambition and independent initiative are subject to the will of the State. All Russia gets its food in bread lines, or subsists at communal kitchens. That is not an emergency measure. It is a permanent policy and one of the fundamentals of the new theory of social organization.

## IN THE WAKE OF REVOLUTION

To me it seems inexpressibly dismal. To the Russian workmen and peasants it is the best they have ever known. No wonder they like it. They are not starving; in fact there are not many of them who go hungry unless they have been caught in some disparagement of the iron-fisted government. Then their conditions become desperate. But the workman's fare in Russia is not what the poorest American workman would call inviting.

In my swing around the big circle I visited and ate at all of the communal eating establishments that were available. The old boarding house quotation: "Oh Lord, the same yesterday, today and forever," came back to me with renewed emphasis. The eternal cabbage soup, black bread and muddy looking porridge, made from ground millet seed and eaten without milk or cream, are sustaining enough, but one needs a hearty appetite to enjoy such a diet every day "world without end, Amen."

The food conditions are gradually improving as the organization of distribution becomes more and more perfected but that is one of the serious problems which confronts the Soviet rulers. They must, if they are to continue to control the great mass of one hundred and sixty million people, give them a taste of the riches which have been so abundantly promised.

The need is pressing. That is why everything is being sacrificed to the speedy completion of the Five Year Plan. One thing is certain: the Soviet officials are perfectly aware of the perils which confront them in this situation and are doing their best to manipulate, by means of a large group of executives with boy scout experience, the most unwieldy and intricate piece of social machinery ever devised.

## DING GOES TO RUSSIA

From Leningrad, on an arm of the Baltic Sea in the north, through Moscow, and down to Sevastopol on the Black Sea at the extreme south, is a trip of two days and two nights continuous travel. That is the narrowest axis of Russia. The route traverses a wide expanse of forests, highly cultivated agricultural areas along the Dnieper River, traverses the Ukraine and Crimea and lands the traveler in the heart of the Russian Riviera, the playground of Asiatic princes, Russian aristocracy and rich merchants for centuries.

Down this ancient highway from north to south and along a parallel route down the Volga River to the east have traveled the gorgeously bejeweled and heavy handed Czars, members of the ruling class of Russia, the merchant princes and landed barons with their retinues en route to their winter palaces, summer estates and favorite resorts on the shores of the Black Sea. It has been, in the past, a golden highway down which only the privileged classes had occasion to travel. The rest of Russia got down on its bended knees, uncovered its head and bowed low as they passed by.

Now heavy trains of second and third class coaches, jammed to the corridors with steaming humanity, sleeping in their clothes, eating their coarse food and carrying their bedding in rolls, transport the favored workers and their families over the same route and deposit them in the old resort towns along the shores of the Russian playground. After they have spent their quota of vacation days, back they go, and are replaced by a new contingent. For the meek have inherited the earth. It is a year-round program.

The Russian Riviera is classed as both a summer and winter resort. Personally, I felt there were some reservations necessary regarding the climate before it could

## IN THE WAKE OF REVOLUTION

qualify as an ideal place to spend the summer. The trip across the Crimea and southern Caucasus, and from Sevastopol to Batum, Tiflis and Baku, gave me an entirely new idea of heat. It was the hottest weather I ever endured and, coming from the corn belt in America, I've had some previous experience.

The northern coast line of the Black Sea is cupped in with precipitous rocky peaks and ridges and is quite picturesque. Upon the slopes of these slightly, wooded hills glisten the white walls, stone colonnades and broad verandas of the old palaces and country estates of the once flourishing aristocracy of Russia.

From Sevastopol the entire coast line to Batum at the eastern extremity of the Black Sea, a three days' journey by boat, is dotted with villas, resorts and long stretches of sand and gravel beaches. Spacious white hotels in the European style of 50 years ago—tall French windows and little balconies opening out toward the sea from each room give from a distance the appearance of princely comfort and luxury. Closer inspection brings disillusionment. It was along this route that my curiosity led me.

As our train approached Sevastopol from the north in the early morning, there began to appear within the range of vision from the car windows, the well built houses, gardens and landed estates of the late wealthy owners, now so conspicuously absent from the picture. An atmosphere of disarray and neglect was apparent wherever one looked. Carelessness of the beauties which had once been the pride of the former owners had left its marks.

A loose blind hanging at an absurd angle by one hinge gave a key to the whole scene. Frugally clad peasants lounged in awkward and unconventional

## DING GOES TO RUSSIA

poses on the broad verandas or leaned from uncurtained windows. Each new place, as we passed, contributed to the impression of a great baronial estate where the retainers had locked their masters in the cellar, thrown the key in the well and had moved in, bag and baggage. They had quite evidently settled down for good, but with no intention of altering their manner of living to conform to their new luxurious surroundings. Instead of raising themselves to the level of the new position they had assumed, they were letting the surroundings sink to the level to which they had been accustomed. That seems to be one of the great tragedies of revolutions. They destroy not only the aristocracy but all the upper layers of culture and leadership and have nothing left with which to replace them until the passing generations have grown a new crop. It will take the Russians generations to again lift themselves to the high standards of living and civilization which they ruthlessly cut down in the brief years that passed between 1917 and 1921.

Their gigantic industrial program, which is to furnish them with all the mechanical devices and conveniences, may be successful in delivering to them the cultural paraphernalia, but, like the magnificent old estates now swarming like tenements with the proletariat, it seems hardly possible that they will know what to do with them when they get them.

One ponders what will happen to the 350,000 new automobiles which the Soviet government generously hopes to turn over to the people in one year—and what will happen to the people who try, for the first time in their lives, to run them and ride in them. It is to be hoped that the schools for surgeons are planned on a scale to keep pace with the sudden influx of speeding cars.

## IN THE WAKE OF RÉVOLUTION

Still, come to think of it, we haven't done so well ourselves when it comes to the handling of automobiles, which we have had in great numbers for about 25 years and with which we manage to kill about 30,000 people annually. One glance at what the "proletariat" has done to the fine old hotels, however, is not reassuring when you think of them generously supplied with 60-miles-per-hour motor cars.

Our train stopped at a small village station, a few miles out of Sevastopol. Evidently in earlier days of the old Russian aristocracy the small houses of the tumbled down village had housed the retainers who worked on the handsome estate which stood nearby.

There was a wide and handsome stone gateway, with heavy wrought-iron gates, wide open and sagging on their rusty hinges, spanning the broad, curving driveway which led up to the old gray stone mansion. Tall cypress trees picturesquely bordered the road. Between the massive gate posts a scrubby little man in an undershirt, arms akimbo, an old battered cap on his shaved head, straddled with possessive expansiveness. Beside him a sturdy peasant-type Russian girl, about to contribute to the swelling population, lounged comfortably against one of the masonry columns of the gateway.

As the eye followed the now weed-grown driveway back to the mansion, the first item that arrested the attention was the large leaded glass window, which looked out over what had once been a handsome terrace and garden. The window, once the chief architectural feature of the house, was now draped with a stained and patched bed quilt, tacked up at an absurd angle to keep the blazing sun from disturbing the late morning slumbers of the new tenants.



## DING GOES TO RUSSIA



QUITE EVIDENTLY  
THEY WERE ENTIRELY  
UNAWARE THAT IT WAS THEIR JOB TO MAKE RUSSIA OVER IN FIVE YEARS TIME.

## IN THE WAKE OF REVOLUTION

At the other end of the house, a well designed naturalistic lake made a mirror for the foliage which had once cast its well trimmed shadows across the waters. Vestiges of a water-garden showed still in one corner, but the once well groomed lawn which bordered it had now been trampled into a quagmire by the livestock of the new inhabitants, and a squad of motley ducks filtered the now muddy waters through their bills.

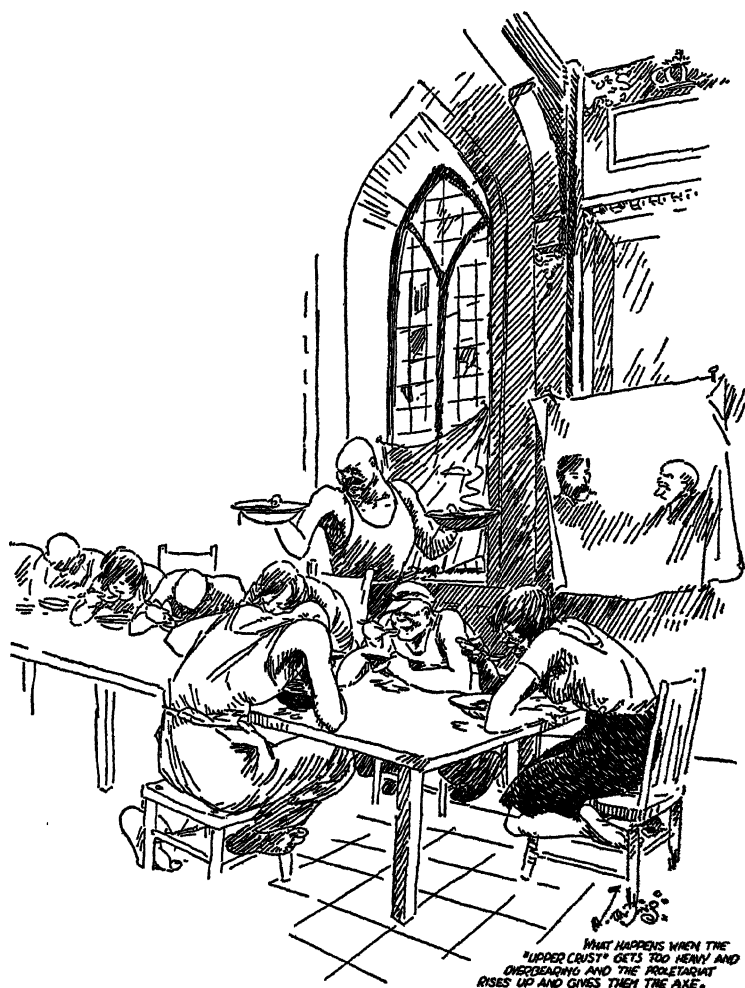
The train moved on, after the customary 20 minutes wait, leaving the two figures in the gateway just as they had stood when we arrived. Quite evidently they were entirely unaware that it was their job to make Russia over into a modernized, industrialized and electrified nation.

This brief glimpse, as we approached the Russian Riviera, was a fair forerunner of the pictures which were to follow. Everything, from the palaces of the former Czars, to the once palatial hotels, has been taken over and appropriated to the program of the Soviet government, which has dedicated itself to the proposition of building a super-civilization out of Russia.

Rows of curtainless windows gaped from one end of the Black Sea to the other and displayed within the tumbled belongings of the "proletariat," who filled every nook and corner of the old resorts, palaces and summer estates. Rooms that had been the palatial banquet halls in years gone by were now dormitories or communal dining rooms. The once handsome parquet floors were now badly scuffed and soiled.

On the high oak paneled walls, where once had hung the gold framed ancestral portraits of the Russian aristocracy, there was only a dog-eared lithograph poster displaying the crudely done portraits of Lenin

## DING GOES TO RUSSIA



## IN THE WAKE OF REVOLUTION

and Stalin. It hung unsymmetrically by two nails driven into the wood panels and flapped loosely in the breeze.

As a rule the rooms were curtainless and barren of decorations, although remnants of paper stickers all over the walls marked the places where other propaganda bulletins had served their day and fallen off.

At meal times, in these magnificent old dining rooms, closely packed around a long wooden table, sat the new masters of the estate, with feet hooked back of the kitchen chair legs and their backs bowed intently forward over their food, their attitude suggestive of devotional prayer before meat. This delusion was entirely dispelled, however, by the noise they made and the recollection that God had been sent into exile.

The heads of the diners were bent so far forward that their propping elbows seemed to be the only thing that prevented them from falling completely forward into their cabbage soup, which they were consuming with the shortest possible transportation haul. They were too intent on their endeavors to glance up and were sublimely oblivious to any of the formalities or manners which their new surroundings might have suggested.

Many of the new accommodations have come so suddenly to these people in their new inheritance that they are as useless to them as a pick and shovel would have been to the aristocrats who lived here before them.

Plumbing, for instance, seems to be entirely beyond their scope of comprehension. The next time I visit Russia I hope plumbers and plumbing equipment will have been put on a quantity production basis. The firing squads must have done a thorough job on the plumbers and I have seen the day when I might have

## DING GOES TO RUSSIA



*EVERYWHERE I GOT THE IMPRESSION THAT THE BOSSES HAD LEFT THE OFFICE BOYS AND JANITORS IN CHARGE OF THE PLACE WHILE THEY WENT OUT TO LUNCH AND HAD NEVER COME BACK.*

## IN THE WAKE OF REVOLUTION

shared, with glee, in the ceremony, but that was before I visited Russia.

There never was much plumbing here anyway and of what there is left, nothing works. What has become of all the bathtub stoppers and wash bowl plugs is a mystery. One misses them more than the landlord, although it really doesn't matter so much since there frequently is no water, never any hot water, and soap and towels are an unknown quantity outside Moscow and Leningrad.

Wherever one goes in Russia, he has the feeling that everybody had stepped out for lunch, leaving the janitors and office boys to watch things while they are gone, and had never come back. They puzzle and wrinkle their stolid brows over what seemingly should be matters of mere daily routine. They call in consultants, search through piles of documents and papers that obscure their desks and finally they get the thing done. The way they are doing things is entirely satisfactory to them. There is nothing about a bed quilt tacked up in a window for a curtain that disturbs them; nor do they see anything wrong in coming to the dinner table in undershirts and with caps on their heads.

Everyone should see Russia today, particularly the so-called ruling classes, just to notice how little the people who are left behind miss them when they are gone. There is a great deal to be learned from Russia, and if we are wise we will learn our lessons from their revolution instead of having one ourselves.

## VI

### RUSSIA'S CURRENCY SYSTEM

RUSSIA has invented a new trick currency system which has about as many queer uses and devices as one of those patent folding ironing boards which you can turn into a baby carriage, step ladder, bread mixer, kitchen chair or egg beater. (The kind those itinerant agents like to bring to your door and demonstrate while the gravy burns.)

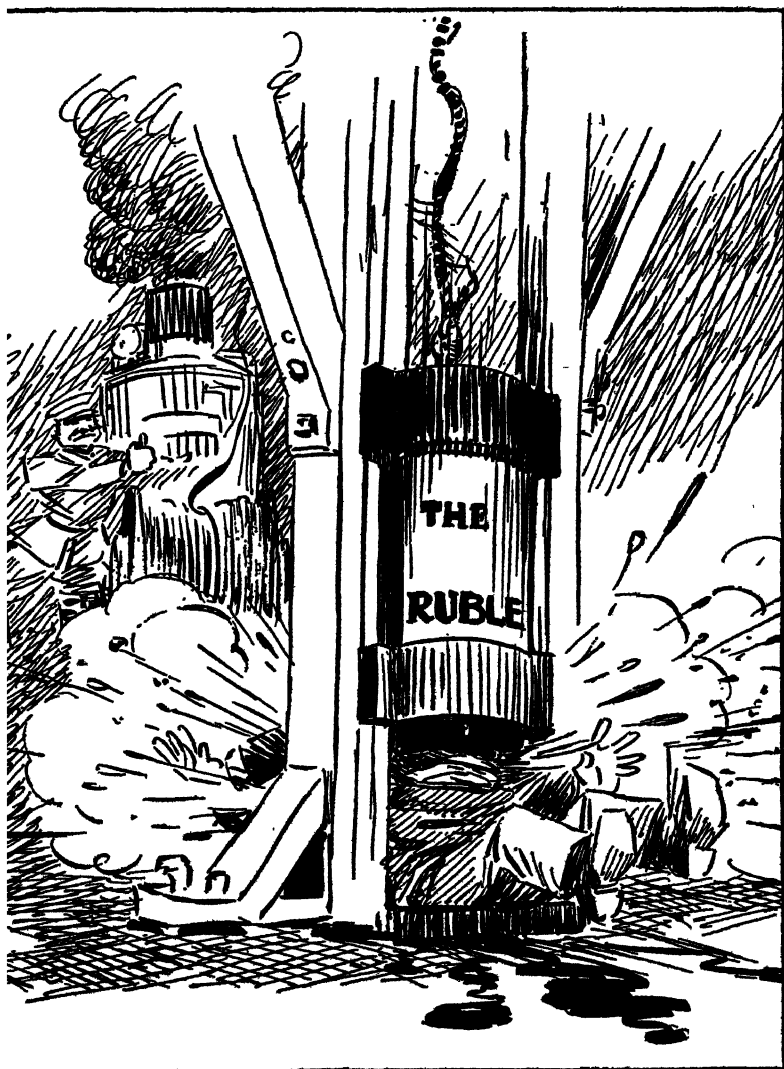
This Russian financial system has another element in common with the patent folding ironing board. It works all right for the inventor but I can't think of anyone else who would want one or could use it if he had it.

In most countries in the world the whole business and industrial structure depends upon the constant and stabilized value of the unit of currency. In Russia it is just the opposite. The government's whole political and business control rests on a sliding scale value of the unit of exchange, the Russian Ruble.

A ruble is worth nothing at all outside the borders of Russia. It is worth only 50 cents in the hands of a workman in good standing and only from four to eight cents in the hands of an outcast who has to subsist on the open market.

And to the foreign tourist traveling in Russia a ruble is worth just what he can get for it, which isn't much. He buys rubles at 50 cents each but no sensitive plant ever wilted more quickly at a touch than 50 cent Russian rubles in the hands of a foreign tourist.

## RUSSIA'S CURRENCY SYSTEM



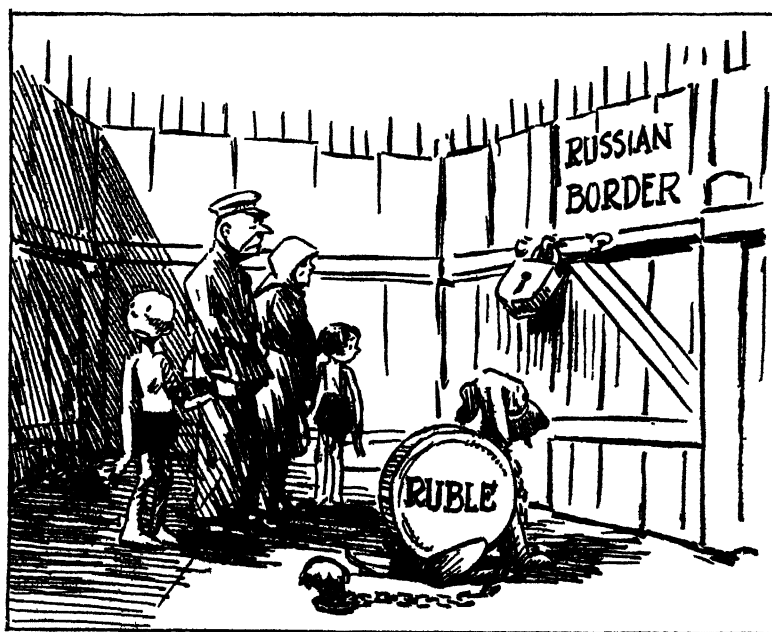
THE RUSSIAN CURRENCY SYSTEM ISN'T A CLUB—IT'S A  
PILE DRIVER!



## DING GOES TO RUSSIA

The resale value of a ruble is like the resale value of a shiny new automobile. Just buying it seems to have a most depressing effect on its price tag.

The government has carefully segregated its people from contamination with any tainted capitalistic associations and will not allow any rubles that have been outside its borders to come back in nor will it allow any



THE SHUT-INS.

rubles that are within to be carried, shipped or spent across the Russian boundary. This becomes a self-enforcing regulation because of the zero value of Russian money on the foreign exchange. The Russian currency and the Russian people must play with each other in their own yard. The fence line of Russian territory is the absolute limit of the activities of either. They are both political prisoners.

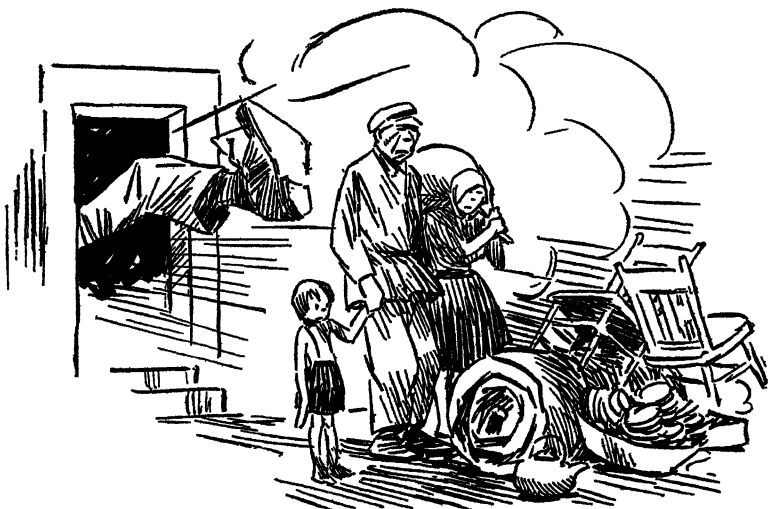
## RUSSIA'S CURRENCY SYSTEM

Furthermore, the people of Russia are forbidden to have or accumulate any foreign currency and without foreign currency they are not allowed to leave the country. A dummy figure of \$150 in foreign currency has been set up as a requirement for any Russian individual who wishes to emigrate but since they are not allowed to accumulate foreign money all hope of departing is stifled. Government bureaus alone may accept money in foreign exchange.

An incident relative to the exchange value of the ruble that came under my notice will be a warning to travelers who may venture into Russia. Two Japanese, going into Russia, discovered that in Germany and Poland they could buy Russian rubles for a few cents apiece. (No wonder.) Thinking to fortify themselves against the fifty-cent rubles within the border, they exchanged their travel money into cheap rubles in Warsaw and approached the Russian border with confidence of having done very well for themselves. To their complete dismay and great financial embarrassment their fat bundles of ruble notes were seized by the border customs officers. Russian rubles outside the border were expatriated rubles. They could not come in. But, said the Japanese travelers, they had bought and paid for them in Warsaw. Ah, very well, the Customs Officer would take their rubles, seal and stamp them, give them a receipt and when the travelers emerged return them and the tourists might find someone who would buy them again in Warsaw. That was the end of the story, except that the two Japanese travelers were forced to do their sightseeing in Russia on short rations until they could get money from home, and their expatriated rubles proved later totally unredeemable upon their return to Warsaw.

## DING GOES TO RUSSIA

The patent financial ironing board has already unfolded into a complete embargo on foreign trade, an airtight tariff wall, an emigration law and a law enforcing consumption of homemade products. But probably the most important trick to the credit of the financial system is its effectiveness as a club over the heads of the people in their social, political and industrial relations. It is more than a club. It is a pile driver.



**OUT THEY GO AND THEIR BREAD CARDS ARE TAKEN AWAY.**

The government has publicly proclaimed the value of the ruble at about 50 cents American money. In practice a ruble is worth 50 cents only when the possessor is also a holder of a "bread card" showing that he is a worker in good standing in one of the workers' guilds. By the simple process of taking away the bread card the value of a ruble drops immediately to about 4 to 8 cents.

This punishment is held as a constant threat over the heads of the people by the Soviet government and is more effective than any armed guard could possibly be.

## RUSSIA'S CURRENCY SYSTEM

If, by some indiscretion of speech or failure to live up to the production schedule which the government has set for the citizen, he is deprived of his membership in the workers' guild, his bread card is taken away and crash goes every individual right and privilege, including the purchasing value of his currency.

The Russian without a bread card is without a soul. He is an industrial and political outcast. He must buy whatever he buys on the open market and the open market is also an outcast institution. That is where only the odd bits and leftovers of the derelicts are taken for sale. A ruble there is worth only an inconsiderable and decidedly variable amount and is constantly being forced down by the government.

I have seen 10 fresh eggs offered, without takers, on these open markets for 5 rubles (\$2.50) and I have paid 5 rubles for one hardboiled egg, and glad to get it. A traveler who wanders away from the beaten path is in the same category as the outcast and must buy on the outlawed markets, where the old rule of "anything the traffic will bear" governs the selling price.

About the worst thing that can happen to a native Russian is to have his bread card taken away from him. It means no job, and what rubles he may have saved will run through his fingers like quicksilver. No wonder they watch their step.

They don't have to have any labor laws in Russia. They accomplish it all through the manipulation of currency values. Thus, in spite of the fact that pure Communism places money in the same class with leprosy and poison ivy, the U. S. S. R. has made of it the most utilitarian device in its whole bag of tricks. By twisting and bending the ruble they do more things with it than a woman can do with a hairpin.

## DING GOES TO RUSSIA

If a foreign guest within the Russian household will stay in the parlor and front guest rooms which have been provided for his comfort and not go poking around into the private quarters of the family he will avoid most of the embarrassments of the complicated currency system.

At hotels under the management of the "Intourist" government travel agency only foreign currency is taken in payment. Likewise at the "Torgsin" stores (for tourists only—one in a town) where foods, embroideries and Russian antiques are sold, they will accept only foreign currency. These institutions were established and are run by the government for the



express accommodation of visiting guests and are ample to satisfy the wants of the not-too-particular tourist in the larger cities. They are much better than anything the Russians have provided for themselves.

They are the only spots, aside from the banks, where foreign money is negotiable. The standard travelers checks with which the average tourist fortifies himself and which he finds acceptable anywhere else in the world, are just scraps of paper to railroad ticket offices, and a twenty dollar American Railway Express check wouldn't buy a cucumber in the Caucasus open markets.

## RUSSIA'S CURRENCY SYSTEM

That is baffling to the tourist the first time it happens. It is terrifying if you happen to be in a faroff rural district and find that the trusty staff you had expected to lean upon so heavily in case your rubles ran short, is nothing but splinters. Such things need not happen to the careful tourist, however, and if the government is to keep within its control all foreign money with which it alone can pay for its foreign made machinery it cannot be expected to allow any more elasticity in the exchange of foreign money.

If the U. S. S. R. is mysterious and tricky with its currency within its realm, it is extremely accommodating and thoughtful at the border. On the way out you will be courteously asked if you have any Russian money and for whatever you may have you are offered full value in the currency of any nation you may mention.

To the foreign traveler who generally winds up a European tour with his pockets full of heterogeneous leftovers and unredeemable coins, this Russian innovation is a great relief.

Tips are not only not expected but the offer of a gratuity will not infrequently bring a rather sharp rebuke. This is not always true but is quite general and within the realm of officialdom there is an absolute prohibition. You may not buy even a lunch for a friendly official. Graft is the one crime in the Soviet State that is punishable by death, sure and swift.

The government alone deals with the outside world. It maintains a rigid control of all foreign money that comes within its borders.

It alone sells the surplus of Russian products, receiving in payment foreign currency, out of which it pays for everything it buys in foreign markets. It

## DING GOES TO RUSSIA

keeps all its foreign money in one pocket and all its Russian money in another and never allows the two to become mixed or touch each other. The people deal only with the government, in Russian currency, and only the government deals with the world in foreign currency.

Money talks in Russia but not as it talks in any other country in the world. It speaks as many dialects as the Russian people themselves.

## VII

### PROPAGANDA

**R**USSIAN propaganda has assumed so large a place in the public mind that it almost overbalances sane judgment on many economic subjects which would otherwise assume a normal place in the problems of the day.

The Russian propaganda you are thinking about is that which they are supposed to be exporting to undermine the capitalistic world outside Russia.

You probably haven't seen any of it, but even if you have, "you ain't seen nothin' yet." Wait until you see the propaganda the Russians keep for home consumption.

You will "Read it and weep!" Like all the other commodities which Russia produces, they keep the worst for themselves, and it is awful.

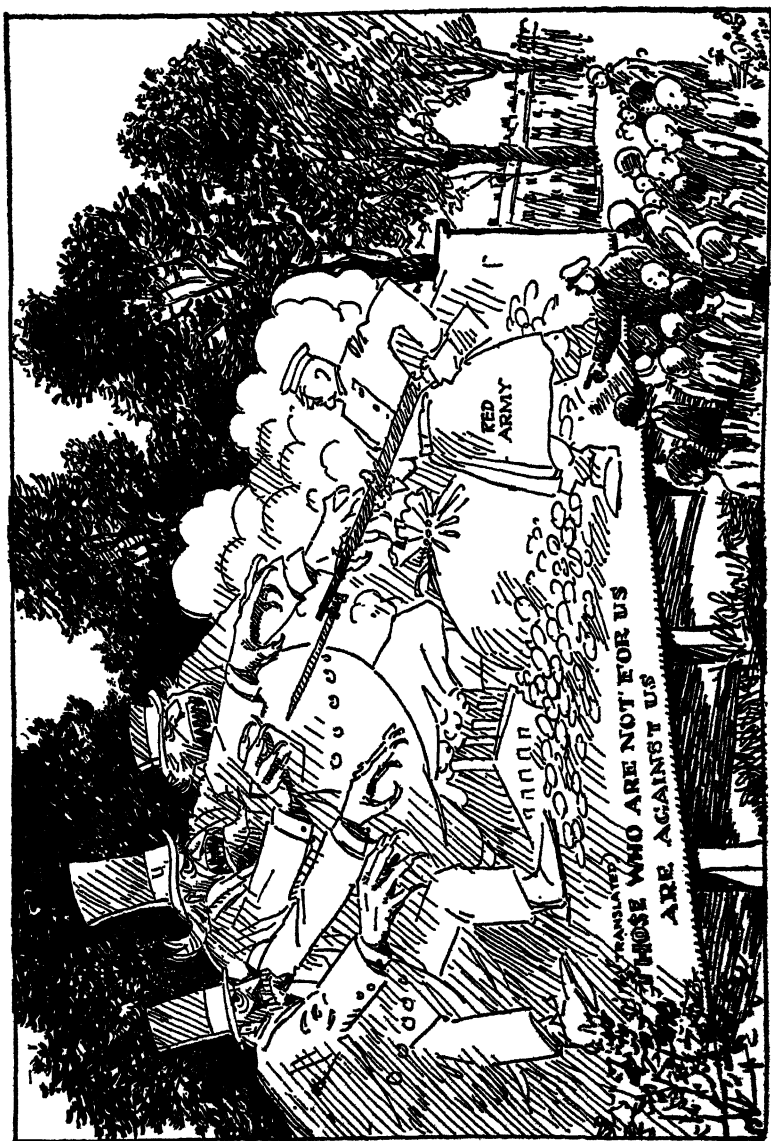
One can be mild and tolerant about much that is going on in Russia, because of the circumstances which brought it about and the problems they have to face, but the continuous barrage of bitter, poisonous hatred which is being poured into the youth of the Soviet Union is the most pernicious aspect of the whole Russian situation and bound to cause trouble.

It cannot be excused on any ground, not even the alleged purpose of frightening the people into super-human endeavors for the Five Year Program.

The elders are implanting in the minds of young Russia a fear and animosity that cannot be erased when the work of the Five Year Program is done, nor for a lifetime afterwards.



## DING GOES TO RUSSIA



## PROPAGANDA

The Soviet government cannot understand why America should refuse her commercial credits for the purchase of machinery and equipment. They point to the records to show that the new government's financial credit is perfectly good, but if it rested with this observer to offer any advice (which of course it does not) there would be no credit of any kind allowed Russia under any conditions until the U. S. S. R. ceases to sow the seed for a future crop of bloodshed, war, hatreds and conflict by means of its present campaign of vicious propaganda among its own people.

No moving picture show in Russia seems complete without an exhibition of shooting a few capitalistic villains.

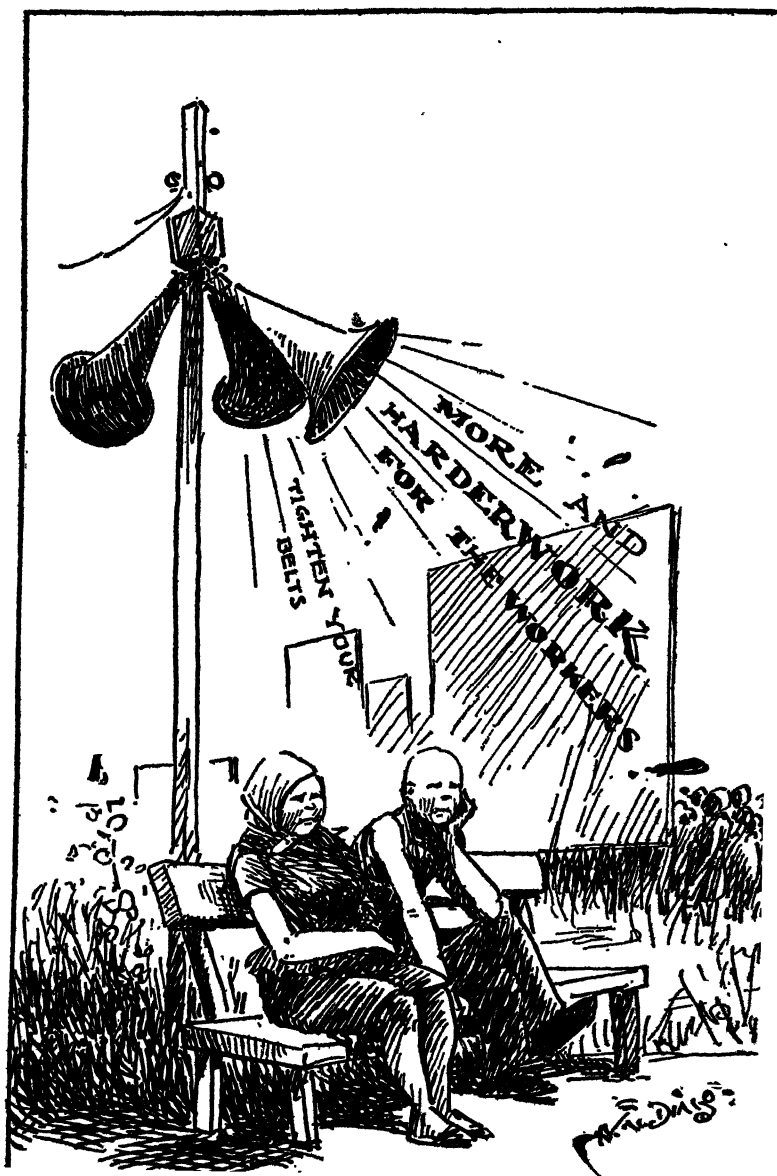
No public square or park escapes the inevitable heroic billboard, sawed out in profile and depicting America and all the other great nations as yellow fanged monsters bent on the destruction of Russia or the enslavement of her people.

No art gallery or museum in Russia can be found where at least one room is not dedicated to an exhibition of horribly crude paintings, posters and cartoons with always the same theme: a capitalistic demon gnawing at the vitals of the Russian workmen, and the Red army in stalwart defense.

There is a radio receiving station in every labor community of any size throughout the land, whose wires carry an almost continuous stream of inflammatory speeches to large broadcasting horns that are mounted in all public gathering places—street corners, parks, bathing beaches and public auditoriums.

If there is a parade or athletic review there is sure to be a float of caricature cutouts, in no vein of ridicule or humor but brutal and instilling hatred.

DING GOES TO RUSSIA.



## PROPAGANDA

All the news in the daily press is warped and twisted to support the general proposition that all foreign governments are conspiring against Russia and are crumbling to pieces through the agency of decaying capitalism.

In the American press our news is warped, also, but it is warped according to the varying prejudices of the individual editorship and the reader may take his choice from a dozen different shades of opinion.

In Russia all the news is cast in one mould by the government agencies. A day will not pass when you will fail to see anywhere from two to a dozen groups of students, children or adult workers with their families being led around by a Soviet lecturer, and if one follows in the wake of one of these groups for any length of time his blood turns cold as he listens to the guides invariably stressing the lessons of hatred taught by the propaganda exhibits.

The people are being fed on the raw meat of bloody hatred. Nowhere could I detect in their attitude toward us that among the older generations there was any personal animosity engendered by the constant imbibing of this virulent poison, but the children and youth, who are more subject to the infectious contagion, are growing up with the conviction that a capitalist is a target for the bayonet.

Little tots will turn in the streets to gaze and whisper "bourgeois," as some unwise person passes who has made the mistake of overdressing in Russia.

It must have been disconcerting if the occupants of a private car overheard, as I did, the group of boys on the railroad platform call out "Parasites" as the train pulled by.

The private car was that of a government railroad official who was doubtless on service of the people.

## DING GOES TO RUSSIA

Reviewing all this one cannot help but speculate on the future when these young folks, full of a creed of hatred, have grown into maturity and are controlling whatever government then exists in Russia.

Perhaps their bitterness will not be greater than that of the elders of the present day who grew up under the injustices of the Czarist rule. Nevertheless it is sowing the spores of the blight which threatens civilization with destruction, and no amount of counter-inoculation can overtake the deadly virus.

If Russia is sincere in her professions of peace and international co-operation she will have to put a stop to her inflammatory propaganda or no one will believe her, and no one should.

She is holding out the right hand of good faith to the world and teaching her children to hate and distrust all peoples who do not subscribe to the Soviet faith.

The Russians, both government officials and the intelligent private citizens, laugh at America's hysteria over Bolshevik propaganda, which is supposed to be sent out from Russia to undermine the capitalistic governments of the world.

They laugh at Hamilton Fish and his congressional committee's report. They do not laugh at England's anti-Russian propaganda campaign, for it makes them boil with rage. They swear that the English seizure of alleged Soviet literature and private papers in London was a forgery and a frame-up and had no basis in fact. They make a good case to substantiate their claims.

Norway is flooded with Soviet export propaganda.

Finland, Sweden and Denmark are equally vehement in their accusations that they can trace the flood of Bolshevik literature to the doors of the Soviet Union.

## PROPAGANDA

Germany has so many Bolsheviks within that she cannot be sure whether the propaganda there is generated in Russia or by her own wayward radical communities.

To all these charges Russia answers with a flat denial and points to her tightened belt, drawn up to the last notch in order to save money enough out of her household account to pay for her new machinery.

Her chief alibi rests in the fact that she has no money to give to such a worldwide campaign. She whines that if she had an extra kopeck she would buy railroads and locomotives and many things she needs much more than she needs to send propaganda abroad.

She washes her hands completely of guilt and lays all the blame on the "International." And the "International" proudly accepts the accusation. Yet the Soviet government furnishes a permanent home for the "International" in Moscow, and has given to its use one of the largest office buildings in the center of the capital city where space is priceless and in great demand for the needs of the people and the government.

The Soviet leaders live in intimacy with the International and if the International is guilty of breeding revolutionary poison, the Soviet Union cannot escape the stain of fatherhood.

The government's argument that Russia cannot afford anything for foreign propaganda would sound much more convincing if she did not find ample resources to plaster her own country with costly war breeding posters and expensive exhibitions of inflammatory sentiments.

If Russia is so badly in need of emergency equipment she could build a monumental amount of almost anything she needs with the materials, labor and time she

## DING GOES TO RUSSIA

has expended in her poisonous propaganda for home consumption.

Probably it is a natural human trait to want to missionarize the heathen with whatever creed one becomes thoroughly imbued. Everyone does it, from Methodists to Mormons, and from Communists to Democracies.

One may remember now, with some chagrin, the patience shown by England when American citizens financed the campaign for an Irish Republic. We cannot expect others to avoid, on ethical grounds, the methods which we ourselves have practiced.

But if Russia needs commercial credits she is not likely to get them if Americans get a good look at the propaganda with which she is poisoning the minds of her own people.

## VIII

### BATHING A LA MODE

**H**ow the Russian people keep as clean as they do with the total lack of facilities to aid them is a miracle. An American traveling in Russia feels terribly abused with no hot water for shaving, stopperless and often waterless wash basins, no soap or towels and bathtubs as rare as polar bears in the U. S. A.

Up to the time when the Five Year Program began to install them in the new workmen's lodgings, bathtubs were museum pieces. As a consequence the Russian people bathe in the rivers. No wonder Russia has achieved a reputation for naked bathing.

After all, I can't think of anything more inconvenient than taking a good scrub with a bathing suit on, unless it is undressing in a Pullman sleeping car berth.

And the great mass of the Russian people appear scrupulously clean as to their persons and clothing. You seldom see a grimy faced child, an unshaved man or a disheveled woman outside the remote and inaccessible areas in southern Caucasus and the Tartar populations in the southeast. These districts can be compared to the Tennessee mountaineer areas of America and the Mexican populations of the south, where communication is difficult and influence of civilization at a low ebb.

Even in the large industrial developments where excavations extend for miles, concrete mixers spatter indiscriminately and clouds of dust and cement blow



## DING GOES TO RUSSIA

*THE FIVE YEAR PLAN HASN'T YET REACHED QUANTITY PRODUCTION  
OF BEACH PAJAMAS.*



## BATHING A LA MODE

through the skeletons of new buildings in process of erection, the short, round-chinned Ukrainian women, with their kerchiefed heads and faded, one piece cotton dresses, keep themselves and their clothes so spotless that it seems incredible. Not so much can be said for the men.

The American cartoonists will have to get a new model for the typical Russian. He has shaved off all his whiskers and while he was about it he went on and shaved his head too. It is going to be as difficult a readjustment for the cartoonist as when John D. Rockefeller, for years notoriously bald, started to wear a wig.

I never did set much store by the blindfold test for cigarets but if the same experiment were tried with an Arab, an Algerian, Egyptian, Turk, Italian and Russian, I'm certain that the Russians would have all the best of it and by a wide margin. Old Russia has no idea of sanitation whatsoever. That part of it is pretty bad but they do bathe.

The secret of it is, of course, that Russia is generously supplied with rivers and ponds which, in the summer time, are literally full of people. They seem to be making up in the summer for all their winter shortcomings in that direction. The miles of sandy beaches of the Moskva River, always liberally patronized, simply surge with bathers at the noon hour and after work in the evening. They line the shores for several miles beyond the city limits. All along the Dnieper, Don and Volga Rivers, and on the shores of the Black and Caspian Seas so many thousands fill the waters that one wonders if they are not neglecting their business.

There will be universal disappointment, however, among those who like to believe nothing good about

## DING GOES TO RUSSIA

Russia, to know that the women and girls stay in groups by themselves and the men and boys go in several hundred yards away. This segregation is entirely voluntary but I seldom saw the custom violated, even in the city of Moscow, where bathing suits have become quite prevalent in the last year.

Bathing suits? Yes, they wear bathing suits if they have them. And I got the impression that nude bathing was a custom adopted from necessity, and would continue until such time as the government factories can produce bathing suits in sufficient quantities to meet the demand. My own bathing suit, American made and fortunately part of my traveling equipment, was an object of envy among my garmentless bathing companions. They inspected it, felt its texture and even suggested, on several occasions, the possibility of making me a typical Russian bather by offering to buy the suit off my back. I concluded, however, that when it came to a choice between myself and the Russians as to who would do the nude bathing, I'd leave it to the Russians. Their background of customs makes them much better suited to it. People who have lived six to twelve in one room all their lives aren't so skittish about undressing in full view of others as they will be a few years hence, when new and improved quarters have accustomed them to some privacy.

One of the doctrines of the Soviet faith is that the people shall get their vitamins from the sun, to make up for the lack of them in their otherwise well balanced diet. There is no milk, cream, butter or oranges for general consumption and the winters are long, severe and overcast.

They must make vitamins while the sun shines and they lie out in the sunshine like so many seals after

## BATHING A LA MODE



## DING GOES TO RUSSIA

All was done amid shrieks of laughter both from the participants and the bathers on both beaches, and as he picked himself up, spitting and spouting sand from every pore, he beat an ignominious retreat amid great applause from the gallery which had gathered to see the show.

There isn't any law against going bathing naked, mixed or any way you choose, in Russia, but there are certain accepted dictates of modesty which it is much better to observe than ignore.

The people may seemingly go as far as they like but they musn't peek.

## IX

### BOURGEOIS TACTICS

IT IS no wonder that Russia, to the outsider who gets his impression from the strange tales that have been told of it, seems like some strange, new creation of a Luther Burbank wizard at work in the social garden.

Russia is far away from the American reader and the curiosity which has grown up around it makes any story that comes out of it seem like the remarkable fables as told by the spies returning from Canaan.

If the Russian agricultural laboratories grow a super squash or an egg plant three feet long, Walter Duranty, New York Times correspondent, writes a dramatic narration of the wonders of Soviet Russia. And the American public sits back in pop-eyed wonder, apparently forgetting that the department of agriculture in the U. S. A. did the same thing many years ago and printed tons of pamphlets about how any farmer might do it.

Probably your congressman sent you a copy, which you promptly threw in the waste basket, and no one ever read.

If some emotional reformer makes a supervised visit to Moscow and Leningrad and comes out with miraculous tales of the new housing program for the workers, which the benevolent Russian government has planned, the American public gapes with hysterical astonishment, forgetting that Mrs. Russell Sage, Jacob Riis,

## DING GOES TO RUSSIA

Theodore Roosevelt and the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company inaugurated the same movement many years ago and incidentally discovered that their cultural bathtubs were used for wood boxes, just as the Russians are discovering today.

City planning commissions throughout America in hundreds of cities have taken up the work where the pioneers left off and there is scarcely a city in America that isn't farther along with the reforms of housing conditions than Russia will be at the end of her Five Year Program.

The Rockefeller Institute alone has done more for the relief of human suffering from disease than all of the Soviet clinics can ever dream of and there is not a city or hamlet in America that cannot show better facilities for caring for the sick, the poor and the incompetent than any boasted sanatorium for the workers in Russia.

It is too bad to spoil a good fairy story—seems almost as cruel as telling little children there isn't any Santa Claus—but there really is no reason for getting so hysterical about Russia.

Those of us who lived through and remember the artificial devices which were used in America during the World War to stimulate the public into heroic efforts would feel perfectly at home in Russia today. The Five Year Program would not seem like such a mysterious monstrosity if we were to see it in time of war instead of peace.

Everything they are doing in Russia today is so much a reminder of the same technique we used in the war that it is like reading the "Fifteen Years Ago Today" column in the daily newspapers to travel through Russia and witness the methods, the spasmodic energy and the pumped up emotions which mark the

## BOURGEOIS TACTICS

efforts of the Soviet government in every corner of this vast country.

They have borrowed every trick and device that was invented during the World War. All the methods we used to energize the American public into a united front for military victory have been adopted here to yank the Russian population out of the primitive civilization of the middle ages and land it in the midst of the mechanized era of the Twentieth Century. The aim of the Russian government has been to do it in five years. They will come just about as close to it as we came to settling all the problems of the war when we signed the Armistice on Nov. 11, 1918.

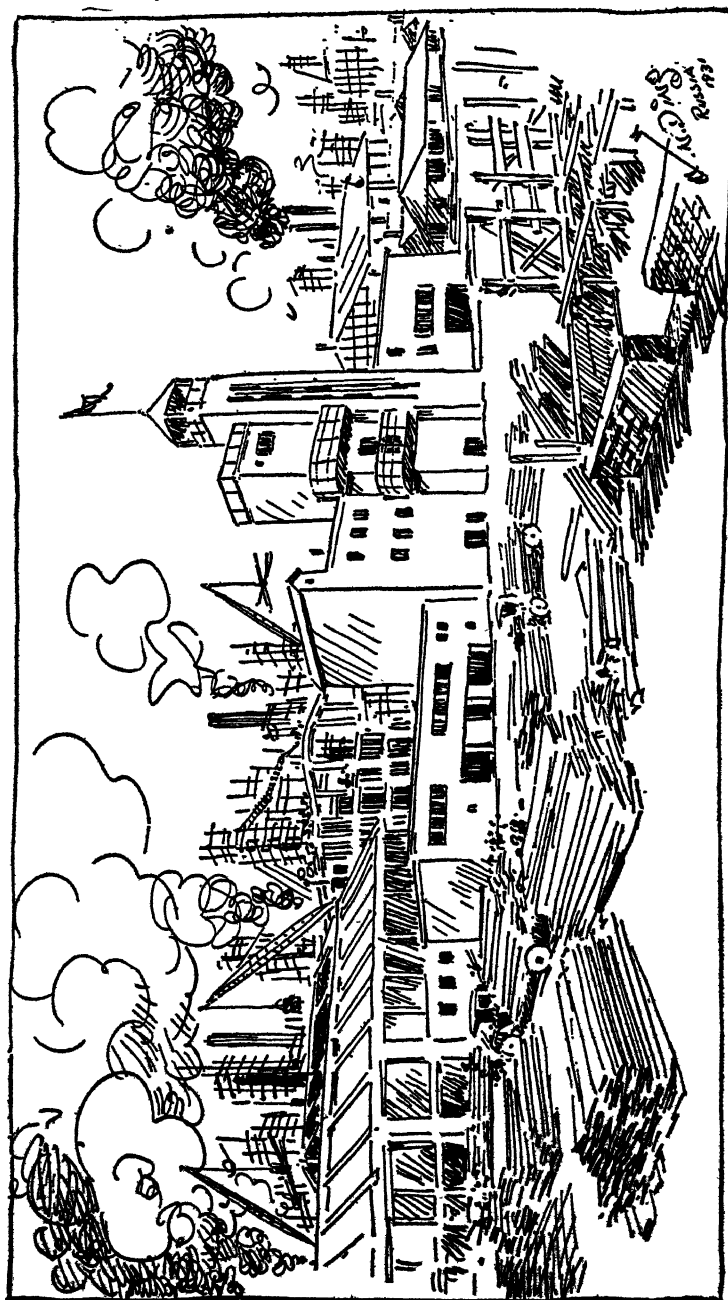
They have adopted, as we did, a modified government dictatorship which rules with an iron hand and tolerates no opposition sentiment. Forced draft production is insisted on, no matter what it may cost in money or human sacrifice. They have trade embargoes, food restrictions, "four minute speakers," florid propaganda and wild juggling of currency mediums. Slackers and conscientious objectors are clapped into jail and "liberty loan drives" periodically test the patriotism of the populace. It is all very familiar.

When a nation is involved in a great war it is taken for granted that every able-bodied man and woman will throw every ounce of energy into the struggle. The entire community becomes fired with the contagious fervor for heroic effort and sacrifice. Youth catches fire and feigns maturity in order that it may join the ranks of combatants. The spirit of the elders is reflected in the games of the children in the streets.

All these phases are visible at every turn of the road in Russia today. Russia, more than any other nation in the world, has declared herself against war but she



## DING GOES TO RUSSIA



RUSSIA BANGS AND CLATTERS WITH THE ERECTION OF NEW INDUSTRIAL PLANTS AND BARRACKS.

## BOURGEOIS TACTICS.

has applied the exact formulas for winning a war to her peace-time campaign for economic self sufficiency. So far, the formula is working successfully.

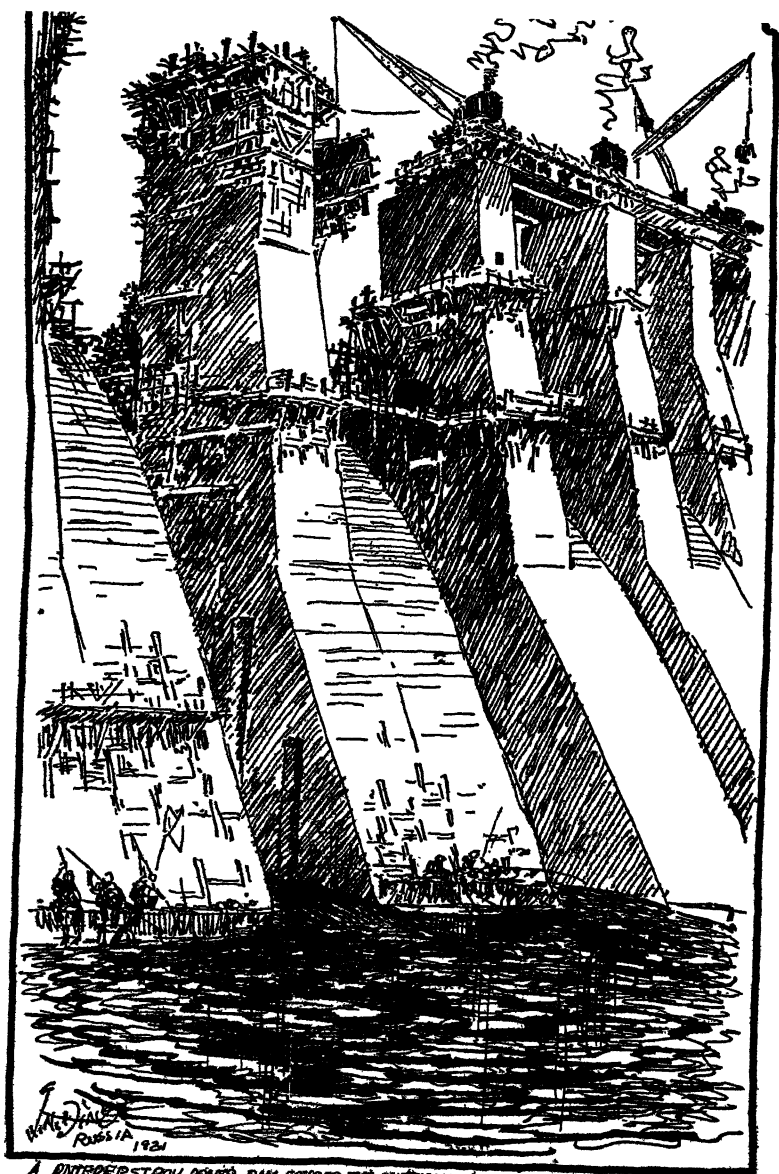
She bangs and clatters with the erection of new, and additions to the old, industrial plants. A Dnieperstroy power dam echoes the American effort at Muscle Shoals. Whole blocks of old buildings are pulled down with a crash and great clouds of dust to make way for new structures more fitted to the great cause.

Emergency water mains and sewer ditches cleave the highways to new projects under construction and old pavements are ripped up for new. At every corner you turn is a new reminder of the days and scenes which followed America's entrance into the war in 1917—all except the military aspect which, if my observations are as competent as they are honest, is surprisingly negligible.

New cities, hastily built of long, low roofed buildings, are springing up over night from the Black Sea to the Baltic, looking for all the world like our wartime cantonments. Trainloads of hastily sawed new lumber fill the railroad sidings; swarms of men, with saw and ax, like so many ants, dot the scaffolding where tomorrow some new integer of the Russian industrial program will turn out the first experimental sample of its product.

All day sounds the clatter of hammers and the screech of heaving cranes, and by night continues under a glare of light from clusters of high power lamps on tall poles. Bill posters, in flaming red letters, call for increased efforts on the part of all patriots. Huge cartoons ridicule and shame the slacker. Blackboard bulletins, clocks and diagrams report the hourly, daily and weekly progress of the work on each construction job.

## DING GOES TO RUSSIA



A BARENTS SEA POWER PLANT ECHOES THE AMERICAN EFFORT AT MUSKIE SHOALS

## BOURGEOIS TACTICS

There is honorable mention and high praise for the efficient workers and scathing ridicule for those who have fallen below their quota of expected production. "Buy U. S. S. R. Government bonds at 10 per cent and help your country to victory with the Five Year Program."

Corps of "shock brigade" workers periodically invade a construction project, set a new pace for the regular local workers and move on to another project, there, by their example, to shame the lagging producers into greater energy.

Widespread propaganda tells them in fearsome terms that the devils of capitalism will get them if they don't watch out; "Shame on the careless worker who injures a machine or wastes material;" "Carelessness is no better than sabotage;" "Tighten your belts for the struggle to victory," and so forth ad infinitum and ad nauseam.

The prevalence of so much hortatory propaganda leads a stranger to suspect that the fervor for the cause which pervades the ruling group at the top is not entirely shared by the great mass of laborers and peasants upon whom the success of the Five Year Program depends.

The government, the press and the Soviet party are perpetually occupied in an unrelenting campaign to keep the people whipped into a frenzy of effort.

If there were an army at their gates threatening the country with invasion the job of keeping the spirit at white heat would not be so difficult. Lacking that tangible enemy they have built up huge bugaboos out of capitalism. Almost daily rumors are broadcast, telling of the preparations which Poland, Finland and France are making to attack their borders. America is pictured

## DING GOES TO RUSSIA

as a devil incarnate, trying to strangle the Russian industrial development.

Huge, "cutout" wooden posters, 30 feet high, decorate the highways, picturing the capitalistic countries as claw-fisted monsters, reaching for Russia's treasures, while a heroic figure of the Red soldier with his rifle at a challenging angle keeps back the horrid monsters from devouring the Russian children.

"Those who are not with us are against us," is one of their favorite slogans. Everywhere is a reminder of the posters we used during the war in an effort to magnify the terrors to be expected from an invasion of the "Huns." No entertainment of any sort, from amateurish theatricals to moving pictures, can be given without the introduction of a harangue by what, in the late war, we used to call "Four Minute Men."

One of the most amusing devices to squeeze the last ounce of effort out of every working man is the "Black Kassa." Out in the middle of the main street, in front of most of the large industrial plants, stands a small frame shack, conspicuous for its somberness. The structure is painted as black as a hangman's robe. Black steps and railing lead up to a pay window elevated so much above the street that no victim who draws his pay there can escape notice. A mammoth black wooden crow straddles the roof beam overhead and looks down in derision while grotesque, bat-winged caricatures of the "drinker," the "slacker" and the "loafer" flank the luckless employee as he ascends and descends.

Here at the "Black Kassa" the drinker, the slacker and the man who fails to produce as much as the boss thinks he ought to produce, is made to draw his pay. The good boys draw their money at the factory office window in the main building.

## BOURGEOIS TACTICS



WHERE THE SLACKERS DRAW THEIR PAY.

## DING GOES TO RUSSIA

In the new tractor plant at Stalingrad, on the banks of the Volga, a huge banner on which was pictured a sleeping camel and the Russian word for "slacker," was hung conspicuously over the entrance to the door of one department in the mechanical section of the tractor plant. It was said that this "Order of the Camel" had been conferred by the rest of the employes of the tractor plant on their fellow workmen for bad workmanship and slowness of production.

I wanted to know whether these stinging rebukes were really inaugurated by their fellow workmen or were dictated from above, by the bosses of the plant, but could get no hint of contradiction of the self inflicted ridicule from the men.

Any workman daring to object or criticize in any way gets his bread card taken away, his family is evicted from their living quarters and six months without employment follows. This makes it a little difficult to tell just how well the workmen like the forced draft methods.

In answer to my question as to whether or not this system of ridicule was productive of increased effort and factory output I was told that it worked very well and that when men failed to respond to this whip they were demoted and put to work in a lower category and at reduced wages.

But if they are severe with the slackers they are extravagantly generous in their praise of those workmen who are efficient and industrious. Their enlarged photographic portraits appear in rows on a long bulletin board in the main corridors of the factories, where everyone may see. Especially heroic producers get their portraits hung on large display bulletin boards in the city parks.

## BOURGEOIS TACTICS

"Shock brigade" workers who have given especially good service are paraded through the streets with a band and banners and are taken on a trip to the Black Sea resorts.

"Nourishing food for the workers—black bread for the lazy," sums up the picture of workmen's opportunity in Russia.

Those who are imbued with the spirit of the great cause are enthusiastic and those who aren't don't dare say anything.

It looks from surface indications, that any American workman who might be thinking of moving to Russia in order to reap the harvest of the new freedom of the proletariat had better wait until the present strenuous period eases up a little.

What this big, artificially energized force is doing to the rusty old carcass of Russia is amazing. For centuries, under the Czarist regime, the country existed in a state of coma. Old cities, built in the era of past glory, seem to have been petrified and to be passing down through the centuries without much apparent change.

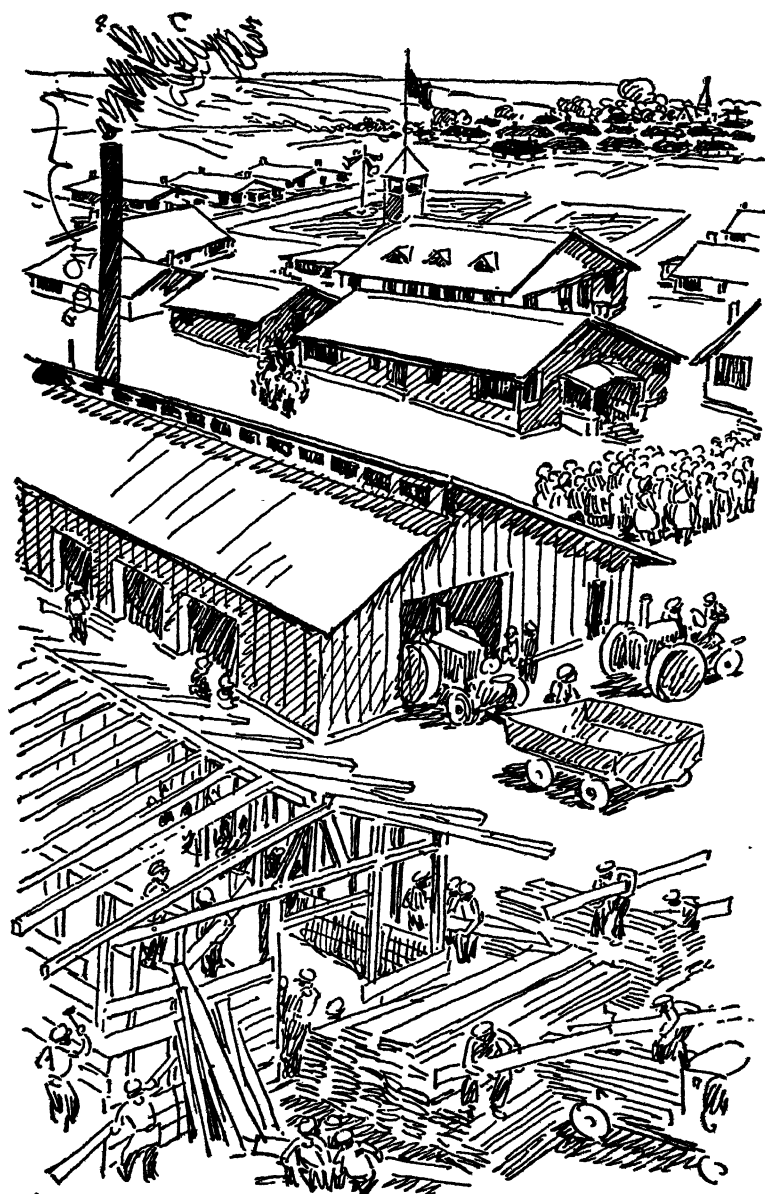
All that was new were the generations which were born into the world, plodded through life in the same restricted by-paths and died without leaving any apparent impression on their surroundings, only to be succeeded by another and another.

All over Russia, age old cities whose skylines have not been altered materially for a hundred years, are suddenly sprouting with new growths, like old dead orchards, gray and stark, from whose roots are springing fresh green shoots.

A fresh cluster of tall, new brick stacks and the steel skeletons of new buildings, forerunners of some indus-



## DING GOES TO RUSSIA



NEW PINE BARRACKS LIKE TOWNS ARE TAKING THE PLACE OF THE STRAW THATCHED AND MUD COLORED VILLAGES.

## BOURGEOIS TACTICS

trial project rise on the edge of towns so old they have taken on the color of lichens. Bright new roofs and white masonry walls begin to show on the periphery of every town I have visited in Russia.

Small peasant villages of straw-thatched, dun colored huts that have been there so long they look as if they were part of the ground they are built on, seem to be crawling out of their old habitations, discarding them as they would a husk. On a spot a few hundred yards away, chosen for its drainage and practical building requirements, they have taken up life in a new town—bright colored moths from old chrysalises.

There long, low roofed barrack-like buildings of freshly sawed pine siding and new shingle roofs glisten in the sun. Here live the new "collectivized community farmers," and the forced transformation has made them, on the whole, just about as happy in their new surroundings, I should say, as the U. S. A. draft army lads were in their long rows of barren frame barracks in the concentration cantonments back in 1917 and 1918, which these new collectivized villages very much resemble.

A long, low communal kitchen and dining hall, which in the beginning also serves the double purpose of meeting room and executive office, forms the nucleus of the new village.

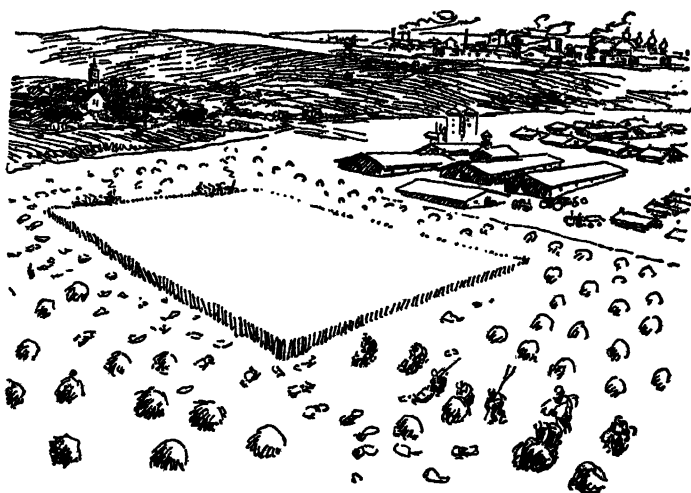
More one-story buildings, similar in design but smaller, extend away from it, flanking a broad central street. Here are housed the collectivized peasants, the community nursery, the school, and if the nature of the village requires them there will be barns for the livestock, bins for grain and sheds for the farm machinery.

The old peasants' little individual fields are gone and they and their wives work when and where they are

## DING GOES TO RUSSIA

told, with groups of their neighbors, and whether they like it or not they have to pretend to. Now that the benefits of systematized farming have begun to make increased returns to the farmers they are beginning to accept the new order of things with a good deal of satisfaction in some of the best managed areas.

Out on the broad Russian Steppe of Northern Caucasus another great transformation has taken place. The new growth which has appeared there is violent



and virile. It is the one conspicuous undertaking of the Five Year Program which has been practically completed and is proving so successful that it is worrying the wheat markets of the world.

Here are more than five hundred thousand acres of land, with rich, black soil three feet deep being cultivated, planted and harvested under the direct management of the Central Government of the U. S. S. R. It has wiped out all of the little elongated fields which used to divide the fertile valleys and hills into an

## BOURGEOIS TACTICS

intricate patchwork quilt design. Broad stretches of wheat, oats, barley and sunflowers that reach to the horizon without interruption have swallowed up everything. The government hires all the farm help, pays cash wages and keeps all the crops and produce for its own profit. Everything here is grown for export.

Although the world wheat market has had a great deal to say about the Russian invasion, it should be made plain that up to date the Russian wheat exports have barely reached the mark established before the World War. Her worst enemies would probably agree that she was entitled to that much of the world trade.

Three thousand hands are employed on Gigant, the largest of the state farms. From the new frame cantonment villages they are rushed out to the fields by auto-bus in three eight-hour shifts a day. Machine shops, forges and great sheds for housing equipment, make these state farm centers look like mushroom towns that used to grow up over night along a new railroad right-of-way to the Middle West during the pioneer boom days.

Here is a wheat farm run like a factory. All the sciences of value to agriculture are applied. Experts time the planting, select the seed and superintend the harvest. Not a horse is used on the place except to carry inspectors on horse-back through the fields. Everything is done by machinery and on the Gigant state farm it is all of American make. Industrially it has been an improvement over the old peasant methods but it has reduced the farm population to the level of a Ford plant employe.

Riding in trains and autos for days (in harvest season) across these vast grain lands which extend from the Ukraine down to the Black Sea, west to the Ural

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Mountains, and on up into Siberia, and watching the long trains of heavily loaded wagons full of wheat, drawn by caterpillar tractors, moving slowly but surely toward the grain markets of the world, one is forcefully reminded of the sterling advice given by Alexander Legge to the American farmer to limit his wheat acreage and go to planting something else. Just what Kansas could do in retaliation, if she started out seriously to raise sunflowers as an industrial crop instead of just for button hole bouquets for Kansas congressmen, is a question which the Federal Farm Board should consider some time. If anything should happen to undermine the sunflower industry in Russia she would be lost.

They use sunflower seeds and sunflower seed oil for everything: soups, frying fats, salad dressing, hair oil and what not. It seems to be the universal lubricant of Russia. Miles of sunflowers as large and as carefully cultivated as an Iowa corn field, occupy a conspicuous place in the agricultural landscape.

One thing is certain and that is that when the Agricultural expert has any advice to give the farmer in Russia, the farmer "takes it and likes it" if he knows what's good for him.

In America, the Federal Farm Board, the U. S. Department of Agriculture, all of the state agricultural college professors and research departments can advise until they are black in the face and nobody pays any attention to a word they say.

After a good long look at the Russian agricultural situation, there seems to be only one conclusion to draw.

The American farmer will have to pay a little more attention to business management. If he does there is nothing to fear. If he ignores it he will be swamped by less competent farmers who take advantage of the

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known economic factors in agriculture. It seems strange to see American Agronomists over here being paid large salaries for the same advice they have been trying to give away at home for 40 years, without many takers.

So far I have mentioned, for the most part, only the changes in the sky lines of the cities and the agricultural metamorphosis. They strike the eye of the traveler first and make the most immediate impression. But the real silver inlaid, gold handled, diamond pointed, million ton crowbar with which the Soviet government hopes to pry Russia out of the dark ages is the great industrial development in widely separated districts, away from the cities, ponderous in its conception and magnitude.

Down on the Dnieper River is the largest power dam in the world nearing completion. Adjacent to it, an industrial city, seven kilometers long, is just beginning to show above the ground on a wide, flat prairie, where nothing but a few peasant huts stood before.

Brick and plaster apartment houses, acres upon acres of temporary woodmen's shacks, miles of excavations, skeletons of new factory buildings are in all stages of progress. Towering cement mixers and huge rock crushers make the ground tremble and the whole vicinity hums and screeches like Bridgeport, Connecticut during the war.

At Zaporozhye a manufacturing plant for harvesting combines is just beginning to turn out its first crude looking machines. Novorossisk is quadrupling its capacity for cement production. Rostov and Stalingrad have new farm machinery and auto plants that will compare favorably with the most modern factory equipment in the world.

## DING GOES TO RUSSIA



WORKING ON THE BIG POWER PLANT AT DNIEPERSTROY.

## BOURGEOIS TACTICS

Nizhni-Novgorod, on the Volga, Magnetostroy, over in the Urals, mammoth steel plants in the Urals and Siberia, new coal mines equipped with modern machinery, shipbuilding and caterpillar plants at Leningrad and oil development in Baku—all of them are promising great things for the morrow but only a few, a very few, are actually producing.

Everyone is straining and yanking at the load. I can imagine that behind the doors of the Soviet government there is about the same anxiety that existed in America during the war when everyone was crying "Win the war in the air" and the war department, after being at the job about two years, hadn't yet been able to send a combat plane of its own make to France.

If you would take a composite picture of American activities at the height of the war, its fervor, its prodigious construction programs, trainloads of men and materials being rushed to centers of new activity, food and housing hysteria, liberty loans, Red Cross, Y. M. C. A., bill posters, discretion to the winds, intolerance of objectors and all, and just change the objective from military victory to industrial self-support, you would have a pretty accurate picture of the Five Year Program in operation.

And what are they aiming at, with all this tremendous industrial offensive? One thing is certain. For a long time to come the aim of the Soviet government is fixed by necessity. They must raise the standard of living of the Russian people or suffer collapse from within. And that is a long job.

If all their new giant industrial plants were completed and operating at full capacity it would only mean a very small start. If they added the surplus production of the rest of the world to that of their own it would



## DING GOES TO RUSSIA

still take so long that the men in power in the U. S. S. R. would no longer be there to exercise whatever aims of world conquest they might have.

No one who has not seen the stringency under which the people are now existing can possibly realize how necessary it is that the Russian government, in order to live, must fulfill its promise of better food, more clothes and better living conditions. Before that job is completed will come other men and other times.

And when the men of a new generation come into power twenty years hence, their ideas about world conquest will be largely governed by what progress our civilization has made toward world co-ordination. If at that time the world is still involved in throat cutting and competitive commerce, Russia will undoubtedly be a contender.

Right now they could not maintain a major military war for six months and if their future weapon is to be destructive industrial competition, they will have to greatly improve in efficiency before they can issue a challenge.

Probably the greatest fright which the Soviet government has given the rest of the people of the world has been the fear of the spread of Bolshevism. But if Russia keeps moving away from the principles of Communism as rapidly in the next few years as she has in the past three, there will be nothing left of Bolshevism to preach to the rest of the world. All that will remain will be a government of dictatorship. That has been tried time and again, centuries ago, and found, in the long run, to have serious shortcomings which progressive people have long since discarded.

## X

### NEW LANDMARKS

**W**HEN a stranger goes to Russia to see the social and political results of the most advertised governmental experiment in this generation he finds a great deal to engage his attention. If he goes to satisfy his esthetic eye, to drink in the beauties which a newly opened world may offer, to see magnificent creations of man and striking phenomena of nature, there are many places besides Russia he should go to first.

Architecturally the old state buildings and palaces of Russia offer little worth going that far to see. It seems to have always been the custom in Russia to borrow an Italian or a French architect whenever a new palace, a church or a state building was to be erected. The result is not impressive. The buildings are almost universally constructed of brick, plastered over with mortar and whitewashed. Most of them are now badly in need of repair. Examples of stately design are few and far between and the best of them can be excelled in great quantities in almost any country in the world.

The home architecture is even more starved of talented conception and the residential streets as now seen are reminders of those areas in American cities where forty years ago the prosperous citizens lived in dowdy, overly ornate houses until the encroachment of railroad tracks drove them out and turned their former homes into cheap boarding houses.

## DING GOES TO RUSSIA

All Russian residential streets look like the dead areas of American cities where the families have moved out years ago to make way for the encroaching business district which never arrived.

They have neither the qualities of quaintness nor antiquity to lend them interest. The few exceptions to this uninteresting monotone of all Russian architecture are in the old Tartar walls with their massive brick towers in Moscow and Nizhni-Novgorod, and a few, very few, interesting old churches.

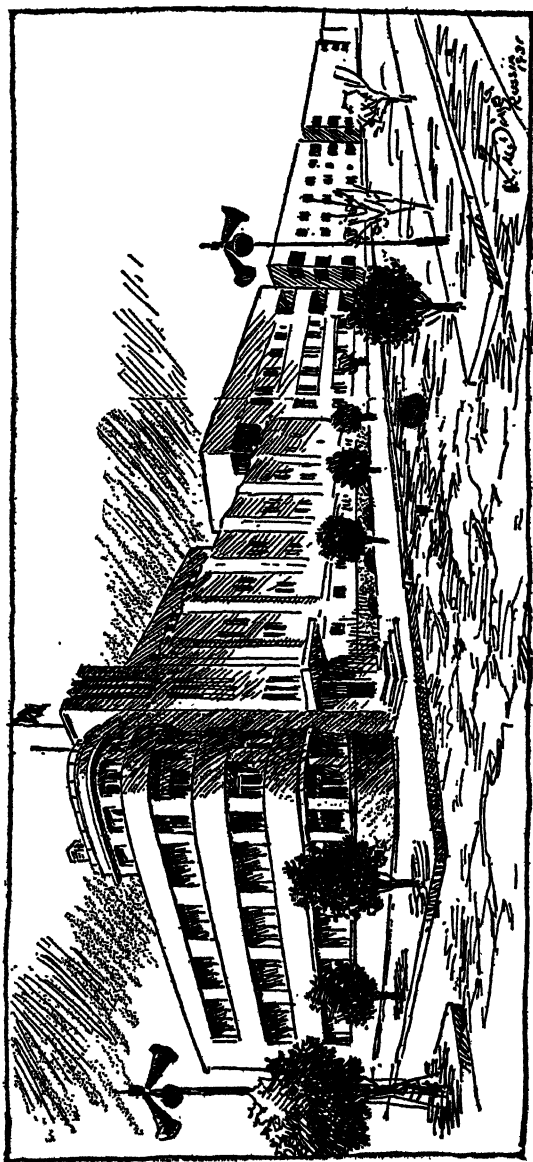
There is also a unique sight of whole towns built of logs in the forest areas of northern Russia. They are distinct in that in no other place in the world has the whole, round log been used to build what might be called a fairly modern metropolitan city—stores, state buildings, houses, large and small.

The buildings, however, are square and blocky without scale or design, except "gingerbread" scrolls for all the world like scalloped paper on our pantry shelves, around the window frames and along the cornices. If one wished to journey far for pretty log villages, they do them much more picturesquely in Norway and Sweden.

But if the old architecture was dowdy, the new is weird. The new government has gone quite as wild in its architecture as in its political theories. Severe designs, without structural shadows or architectural concessions to any known style, flat-sided and as drab and devoid of decorations as life itself in Russia today, characterize the new workers' apartment houses and the new office buildings which the government is erecting to house the extensive bureaus of the government.

They catch the eye with their bold, architectural nakedness as they rise stark and bare in the midst of

## NEW LANDMARKS



THE NEW RUSSIAN ARCHITECTURE IS AS STARK AND BARREN OF INTEREST AS LIFE ITSELF  
IN RUSSIA.

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the "chef's frosted wedding cake" houses of the past generation that line the streets.

The contrast is as complete and startling as a mother hubbard at a Louis XV court ball. In single units these new buildings of extreme modernistic design are a relief from the cramped lines of the old structures. But what will be the effect of long streets lined with these weird conceptions, row upon row of them, can hardly be imagined until you have seen them, and only in spots has the building of them proceeded far enough to make an exhibit.

When Russia comes into its affluent days, some years hence, and the people all have neckties and silk stockings and two or three pairs of shoes and are blasé enough to entertain the idea of a little excitement I shall expect to read in the press that they have sought out the architect who planned these morbid surroundings and have ridden him on a rail into Siberia.

Architects tell me I am all wrong about this point of view on the modernistic lines of the new Russian structures so I will only speak for myself and those of us who like to take our modernistic art in small doses at art exhibitions to which we don't have to go if we do not choose.

Having poured out my wrath against the general architectural panorama of Russia it becomes my pleasant duty to set forth the cheerful news that Russia, first and foremost of all the countries in the world, is going to have a perfectly planned system of parks and children's playgrounds so well distributed in their new additions that there will be sunny recreation areas within easy reach of every individual in the community.

As they tear down the old buildings that line the streets they are widening highways, cutting new main

## NEW LANDMARKS

traffic arteries through dead sections, laying out civic centers around which they will erect their buildings of civic activities and making expert traffic studies with the help of foreign engineers which will be the envy of the world when completed. City planning has been made one of the major departments of the Economic Council's realm and it is being extraordinarily well done.

That is one of the great fascinations about the Soviet experiment. They are making an entirely new country out of an old one. They cut and slash at will and need not fear of stepping on anyone's toes. That is one of the prerogatives of dictatorship. The government owns all the ground and all they need to open a new right-of-way is a gang of men to clear away the mechanical obstructions, throw the people's furniture to one side and lead the objectors off to exile.

No wonder they are having the time of their lives. Barring the few little handicaps of living in a political prison, Russia is a perfect city planning engineer's heaven. No petitions, damage suits or political back-fire—just an OK from the dictator.

It is a never ending mystery to me how these revolutionaries, most of them men of only meager education and acquaintance with the world, could have come into power and in so brief a time chosen from all the latest modern thought the choicest ideas in city planning, industrial production, physical welfare and economic balance of supplies.

To be sure the carrying out of these idealistic plans is as yet but crudely handled but they are pointing in the right direction and more and more the stiff newness of their various social machinery is wearing off and the cogs are beginning to mesh without such shrieks and grinding of stripping gears.

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VIZINI NOVGOROD  
ON THE VOLGA RIVER,  
IS ONE OF THE TWO  
GRANDLY PICTURESQUE  
SPOTS IN RUSSIA

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The first years of imposing the new planned cities on top of the old ones were full of incipient rebellions as age old landmarks were torn down to accommodate modern demands. The tearing down of a few of the old churches ruthlessly trampled on the sensibilities of many of the people who still clung to their old faith. This act also gave rise to exaggerated stories of the total destruction of the instinct to worship.

Of churches there are plenty still standing to accommodate all the people who seem to care to go and



they are holding regular church services everywhere in Russia. No one is denied the privilege of going to church nor is he molested in any way as a result of it, although the churches and the priesthood are in a bad way from lack of financial support since the landlords and Kulaks, who salved their consciences with liberal church offerings, have been eliminated.

And speaking of churches brings us back to the few conspicuous examples of interesting architecture worth a second look in Russia.



## DING GOES TO RUSSIA

At the far end of the Red Square, silhouetted against the sky in striking relief, is a church which looks as if Maxfield Parrish might have drawn it to illustrate an Arabian Nights' tale. Its roof fairly blossoms with a bouquet of spires and minaret-like towers, each topped off with an iridescent or gilded dome like so many budding tulips.

It is as fantastic as a fairy story.

This church has now been turned into a public museum and its picturesque exterior is being preserved for its architectural value.

The rest of the square is surrounded with the massive masonry walls of the old Kremlin and heavy government buildings, which in their grim strength preserve an atmosphere suggestive of the stormy history which has surged around this spot.

The sturdy red brick towers, deep, shadowy arched gates and walls of the Kremlin in Moscow, built during the Tartar invasion of the Thirteenth Century, and St. Isaac's Cathedral at Leningrad, are quite universally spoken of as the prize architectural exhibits in northern Russia.

To me a most powerful example of the picturesque early Russian style of architecture is to be found in the city of Nizhni-Novgorod on the high banks of the Volga River, where an old and battered Kremlin curves its primitive strength around the ancient citadel of early fame.

In this city alone has the architectural style of the old Tartar Kremlin been borrowed and perpetuated in the other buildings of the city. Here the most famous old market of the world, where every year gathered the great traders and merchants from every quarter of the globe with their precious wares, shows what might have

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proved, if developed, a great, distinctive national architecture.

As it is, however, the examples of impressive structures are so few in number and so inaccessible and widely scattered that a visit to Russia for that purpose would come last in the list of foreign countries.

The great market at Nizhni-Novgorod was discontinued two years ago under the pretext of being contradictory to the spirit of Communism. Its massive historic buildings are now being made over into warehouses.

It is another of the great historic pictures whose destruction one must hold against the Soviet government, along with the outlawing of the traditional Gypsy songs and dancing.

Incidentally, the story of the Russian Gypsies is one of the saddest of the whole Soviet experiment. Their plight is pitiful. Natural traders and born to the open road, there is nothing more foreign to their nature or desires than collectivization or a regulated life devoted to the state in a communal village.

They must not trade, they must not dance or sing.

Dancing and singing are supposed to be bad for the pure spirit of Bolshevism. It takes their minds off their work. Like the early Christians, it is considered a hindrance to their heavenly goal.

Plain living and plain architecture, so severe that they remind one of the early puritan asceticism, make of Russia today a drab picture for visiting guests.

## XI

### RUSSIA'S POLITICAL COMPLEXION

RUSSIA's political complexion is not an inviting one to those who have been brought up under the principle that all men were created politically equal. If you don't belong to *the one party* in Russia, you have no voice in politics at all, and most of the 160,000,000 do not. If you do belong to the Party, you vote the ticket straight and voice no dissenting opinion, "and like it," or you twiddle your thumbs in exile.

Even the personally popular Trotsky, the best loved man in Russia after Lenin's death, fulminates and sputters most impotently outside the national boundary. You can imagine what chance a lesser voice would have in the Party "councils."

That the people of Russia loved Trotsky there can be no question. That the Stalin ring could throw him out bodily, in broad daylight, with no effective protest, speaks volumes for the airtight control of the political reins of government. Mussolini gets more limelight but his dictatorship fades into a pale, sickly mauve by the side of Russia's steel locked political device.

It is amusing to contemplate what would happen if suddenly the multifarious faction of American radicals should be called upon to form a Soviet government and agree on a one-man dictatorship like Russia's. It would take a Burroughs Adding Machine to calculate the exodus into exile of radicals with conflicting and unyielding ideas. There would be more Reds out-

## RUSSIA'S POLITICAL COMPLEXION

side looking in than there were left inside to run the party, just as it has turned out in Russia.

Imagine Senator Brookhart, who looks upon all party lines as too confining and gets most of his glory by disagreeing violently with everybody, trying to remain happy and contented under a Stalinlike dictatorship of a single party system. If Brookhart were in Russia and spent as much time jumping party fences there as he does at home, he would probably be one of the first to receive an invitation to take up permanent residence elsewhere. Or, if ill fortune should make him dictator, everyone else in the country would have to leave.

Dictatorship is fine for the dictator, but it is awfully tough on the dissenters. In vain one inquires for the long list of names of men which were familiar by-words in the ranks of the revolutionaries in Russia ten years ago. They are no longer to be seen on the roster of the Soviet government.

Bolshevism set out on its original course under the banner of "Dictatorship of the Workers." Stalin, the dictator who fell heir to the control, never did a day's manual labor in his life. And the workers? You should spend some time in Russia watching them dictate. They do jolly well as they are told and a lot of bad luck befalls the luckless individual who oversteps the iron clad rules handed down from above for his conduct.

Never was labor less emancipated. Between the Party men and the G. P. U. he steers a straight and narrow course, and if he cannot think of anything pleasant to say about the government, he keeps discreetly still. To be sure, he has meetings with the fellows of his craft, endless meetings, more than he wants. These guild meetings open with an address by the chairman,

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NEVER HAVE SEEN LESS ENCAPSATED

## RUSSIA'S POLITICAL COMPLEXION

who is always a Party man, and his speech sounds like the keynote of the temporary chairman at a National Republican Convention.

He "points with pride" to the accomplishments under Party leadership and "views with alarm" the machinations of the disloyal. He forestalls any possibility of the debate getting out from under control by verbally scourging and precondemning all those scurrilous individuals who might be harboring a word of criticism within their bosoms.

From that point on the gathering takes on the atmosphere of a college pep meeting before a football game and the lamblike workers, knowing only too well the fate that befalls any who may express a rebellious thought, are organized into a cheering squad and shout for more and harder work for all good Russian workmen. If any resolution comes out of the meeting it is to indorse the government. No other sentiments are tolerated.

As a consequence the "committees" of workmen who "run" the factories are about as effective in reflecting the free and untrammelled voice of the people as the old ward caucuses of American politics.

There has been much complaint in America about Business in Politics. Politics is all Business in Russia. The Party is not only the political boss but the industrial boss as well. In the center of every one of the new industrial projects throughout the length and breadth of the country will be found the Party man. He may know nothing at all about engineering, automobile construction, looms or power dams but he knows his politics, and everything and everybody, from chief construction engineer down to the lowest hod carrier, is under his direct control.

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Any disaffection in the ranks, any failure of the industrial project to come up to the scheduled production, any flaws in the output are his responsibilities.

He is an arm of the Soviet Council's Political Organization. What he says goes. If he or anyone else says the wrong thing, he is moved and another Party man is sent to take his place. These are the hardest working men in Russia, unless it be Stalin and the commissars. They live like the workmen they control and draw less wages than many of the men under their jurisdiction. My estimate is that they are universally fine men, unselfishly devoted to the cause of the Russian People. That they exercise an inexorable and severe command over their charges is no contradiction of their altruistic motives.

By such harsh methods only can the tremendous task to which the ruling party has set its hand be accomplished. There is no room for "the world owes me a living" philosophy in the Soviet Regime. You work and work hard, or you don't get your cabbage soup and black bread.

The Party men at the head of all the industrial plants, constitute one arm of the political machinery. Another is the strong arm of the G. P. U., which reaches everywhere and is the national police, the regular army and secret service force as well as the strongest element in keeping the political strain unpolluted by extraneous sentiment. They ferret out the disloyal and administer any corrective measures necessary to effect a cure.

A great and wholesome fear has grown up around the G. P. U. It is probably exaggerated by the rumors of mysterious efficiency with which it has become endowed in the public mind, but with the possible exception of

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the Mussolini policing system there is no more efficient constabulary in the world.

Crimes of violence are practically unknown in Russia, and graft, which is punishable by death, is so rare that one would almost be willing to suffer some of the torments of Soviet rule in exchange for that refreshing circumstance. But politics is one of the main charges of the G. P. U. and the small amount of audible grumbling under the terrific provocation which exists in Russia is a tribute to the thoroughness of their operations. Rarely, of late, does one hear of a workman so



far forgetting himself as to utter even the mildest criticism of the conditions which surround him.

A group of workmen whose daily production falls below schedule is first given the propaganda treatment. If moral suasion fails to produce results, a "shock brigade" of hustlers may be sent in to shame the regular force into efficiency. If it turns out that the workers are incapable of keeping up to the pace set for them they are reduced to a lower "category" of work. But if there is sabotage or a disposition on the part of the men to wilfully delay production, if among them are grumblers who complain and spread a spirit of dis-



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organization, there is a final remedy that is swift and sure.

The G. P. U. appears. The "bread card" of the disorganizer is taken from him, his family is evicted from their living quarters and it will be six months before that worker may be considered for reinstatement.

Such incidents are widely quoted as examples of the efficient political supervision exercised by the G. P. U. Their administration is much less fierce and cruel than that of their predecessors, the Checka, but it is severe enough so that there is little whispering of complaint and criticism of the government, even behind closed doors.

Naturally, I was able to elicit none, and in reply to my incessant questioning as to how they liked their government, never was I able to catch even a glance that could be interpreted as a mild reservation. One might almost say that politics and free debate have ceased to exist in Russia as functions of the people.

Wherever Russian workmen are engaged together in an operation of any size there will be a Party man in the vicinity and representatives of the G. P. U. It is their job to act not only as local executives, legislators and judiciary but they are entrusted with the delicate job of watching the pressure gauge of human emotions.

If complaints and grumbling appear too near the surface they must remedy the matter by diplomatic methods if possible. When those fail, then punitive restrictions take the place of milder pressure. So far this libertyless system has worked surprisingly well. There are no signs of cracking in the vessel of Russian politics. When one considers the durability of the regime he is continually conscious of the parallel conditions in Italy, where no one can see what is going to happen

## RUSSIA'S POLITICAL COMPLEXION

when Mussolini dies. In Russia it is the same problem. After Stalin, what?

The process by which the Soviet government is supposed to derive its powers from the representatives of the local Soviet guilds is too well known to be repeated here. But of the original conception there remains only the form. The current of power in the Soviet government has been reversed and now flows from Moscow out, instead of from the workmen into Moscow. Those who try to go counter to the current are ruthlessly destroyed. Justification for this severity is found in the necessity for a united front in the cause of the people.

Little of the program now under way in Russia could be accomplished under any other political method of handling. There is no time for debating among themselves over details of policy and methods. Every ounce of energy and attention is required for the management of the industrial program. Even the best friends of the exiled Trotsky will tell you that he had to go. There was no time to be lost and if he had remained his leadership would have unquestionably split the nation into two factions with an endless amount of debate and loss of momentum in the struggle from economic serfdom. If they had to wait for a United States senate to act, the Five Year Program would take a century.

They are carrying a caldron of molten metal and anyone who gets out of step is a serious threat to the equilibrium. They must all move together or perish.

Stalwart advocates of democracy need not feel that they have surrendered any of their fundamental principles when, in consideration of the handicaps that confront Russia, they nod a reluctant acquiescence to this dictatorship. It has long been recognized that

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THERE ARE MORE OF THE ORIGINAL REVOLUTIONARY BROTHERS  
OUTSIDE LOOKING IN THAN ARE INSIDE RUNNING THE BIG SHOW.

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a benevolent dictatorship was a more direct and efficient form of government than democracy. It is its failure to remain benevolent that has made all dictatorships shortlived.

When selfishness and injustice creep into the Russian regime you may look for the Russian experiment to collapse. We are going to have several years to speculate on what manner of government is to follow.

It is interesting to note, in passing, that at the time of the American Revolution the predominant craving of the people was for "political equality" and the U. S. Constitution was written to provide that then rare luxury. If economic equality entered their minds at that time it was probably presumed that it would follow, automatically, the establishment of political equality.

But the great popular cry has changed. Now it is the sins of accumulated wealth instead of the sins of monarchies that obsess the world. The constitution of the new Russian government ignores completely the subject which engrossed our forefathers. They have discarded the idea of political equality entirely and devoted all their governmental processes to provide economic equality.

The American constitution guarantees political equality. Russia undertakes to insure economic equality. Neither conception has proved to be completely satisfactory. Russia already has had to abandon her theory of economic equality and has gone to the piece system of wage payment, with bonuses for efficiency. And American students of government are searching the archives of their minds to find some provision that may be grafted on our original principles of political equality that will give the added requisite necessary

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to make a perfect government and insure against unjust economic distribution.

Russia, having now neither political equality nor economic equality, has a rough road ahead in the years to come. There will be many changes.

## XII

### THE FIVE YEAR PLAN

EVERYONE asks if Russia's Five Year Plan is going to be successful.

That is the first question always popped at the returning visitor who comes out of that strange bedlam of fantastic theories and medieval inefficiency.

Critical anxiety seems to lurk back of the interrogation as if the fate of the world rested upon the answer. Fears and misgivings that the rest of civilization must crumble away if Russia succeeds seem to be in the back of the mind of the questioner.

To the freshly returned traveler who stayed long enough to get accustomed to standing on his head to look at things, and who has co-ordinated the results of his observations, the question comes as almost as much of a surprise as if he had never heard it before. He had discarded it as unimportant, irrelevant and immaterial so long ago that he had almost forgotten that anyone could still be worrying about the answer.

That question long ago had faded from his mind. He was, of course, as curious about it as anyone when he went into Russia. I can remember now with what careful scrutiny I observed the first few tractor plants, textile factories and power plants that I visited, to see if they were going to swamp the world, and whether their output would be as overwhelming as had been pictured by the advance publicity so amply spread

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over the world by the vendors of news, always bent on exploiting a new sensation.

I kept copious notes, analyzed the figures, estimated the number of men, multiplied the number of men by the hours per day and divided it by the number of articles produced, translated hectares into acres and poods into bushels, figured overhead and depreciation until I was loaded like a camel with data, statistics and figures.

I still have them but they are in the bottom of my trunk and I never expect to look at them again. They are as unimportant in the light of later observations as the mathematics relative to the rockets which some German professor may sometime send to the moon.

Both the Five Year Plan and the Rocket to the Moon may be successful. But what of it? As a matter of fact the Five Year Plan probably will succeed. There is nothing at present in the way to prevent it; but it will make almost no difference to the rest of the industrial world.

When people read that 160,000,000 Russians, with a Five Year Program, were working like mad to complete it, they jumped to the hasty conclusion that it was going to revolutionize the industrial world. Some of the boasts of our zealous radicals in the early days of Bolshevism lent some color to that point of view. What else could these Russians be working for?

If you saw 160,000,000 people going barefooted, whenever possible, to save the one pair of shoes they were lucky to possess; living in one room, barely furnished; and eating only black bread without butter, porridge without milk or cream, and who considered themselves lucky to have a piece of fish to put in their cabbage soup, what would you think they might be

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working for? World revolution or better clothes and food and some of the comforts of life? After just one look at them the answer is obvious. They are working for shoes and clothes and better food.

The great mass of Russian people with whom I talked are not in the least interested in world revolution or industrial conquest. They want things for themselves and are hoping that what they are doing will result in better conditions for themselves. They believe it will. They are willing to make tremendous sacrifices in order to try the experiment.

Those 160,000,000 Russians are the same kind of human beings that inhabit the rest of the world. The thought that they should be willing to make all these sacrifices, to go without common conveniences, to work diligently in order that their automobiles, shoes, textiles and caviar might be exported into countries already better equipped than themselves, while they continue to go without, is an absurd invention of an hysterical imagination.

For many generations these same Russian people, the ones who have just come up from the depths of serfdom, have labored and lived in penury in order that the Russian aristocracy might live on the fat of the land. Having gotten out from under that heavy burden you may be sure they are not going to willingly stick their heads into another yoke without profit to themselves while they flood the rest of the world with their output. Their whole aim and desire now is to enjoy some of those luxuries themselves. They never have had them but they want them and that is what the whole scheme of things is about in Russia today. If the Soviet methods do not deliver these things, then the Soviet government will fail.



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Whether the Soviet government will be successful in its efforts is not going to be answered in this generation nor by the Five Year Plan.

A hundred years from now the measure of its success will begin to be judged.

If, by that time, the Russian people are better fed, better clothed and more content than the other people of the world, other governments may copy the formulas which have proved successful, and those reactionaries who selfishly seek to cling to outworn social orders will suffer the fate of all machinery that has outlived its day.



This assertive conclusion began to take form when I found that the total prospect for annual delivery of footwear from the old and new shoe factories in Russia would be less than enough to furnish one pair of shoes a year for the 160,000,000 people living within its broad borders. That settled the shoe dumping fear.

Russia now has but one automobile for every 6,400 people; America has more than one for every ten. The Russian people all want to ride in automobiles. Most of them never have and they think they'd like it. The automobile factories will be busy a long while before the home wants are supplied and after that there will

## THE FIVE YEAR PLAN



THERE HAS NEVER BEEN ANY SUCH THING AS TOURING BY  
AUTO IN RUSSIA.

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be the whole job of road building for there isn't an automobile highway in all Russia that I could find.

As long as the Russian women have to carry water for household uses on neck yokes there will be a demand for water mains and the staggering length of pipe-laying that will be required to supply this first principle of home comfort will take a long, long time.

I doubt if there are 10,000 neckties in all Russia. I saw less than a dozen, and the list could be lengthened to include nearly everything you can mention in your daily conventional equipment, from safety pins to locomotives.

Russia is a huge vacuum. This Five Year Program and then another and another can pump their maximum capacity into the empty reservoir for years to come and not fill it. The business world which has been terrified by the threat of a Russian industrial conquest has been quaking at a ghost.

A shallow and, I believe, entirely erroneous conclusion seems to have been drawn from the early efforts which the Soviet government has made to get things started. They are selling anything and everything exportable they can lay their hands on to get a little immediate cash to pay for their new machinery and lay the foundations of their new house they hope to live in.

Russia's sale of wheat has only this year approached the figure which they exported to the world before the war. It was natural that a nation seeking to raise its head to the level of modern civilized living standards should first attempt to recover that part of the world market which it held before the war. It is equally clear to a visitor in Russia that but for the immediate necessity of revenue they would be glad to keep much of the wheat which they have sold in foreign markets.

## THE FIVE YEAR PLAN

It has been a tremendous hardship on the native Russians to export all of their tea, caviar and tobacco. It would be like America exporting all of its ham and eggs and grape fruit, until we had none left for breakfast. Russia grows oranges and lemons, tea and tobacco, peaches, apricots, pears and grapes, but has eaten none since the new program was inaugurated.

The money they receive from the export sales has all gone to buy equipment for their factories and a very large share of these orders has been placed in America. Russia has drawn in its belt until it hurts more than most Americans would endure in order to get up on its economic feet.

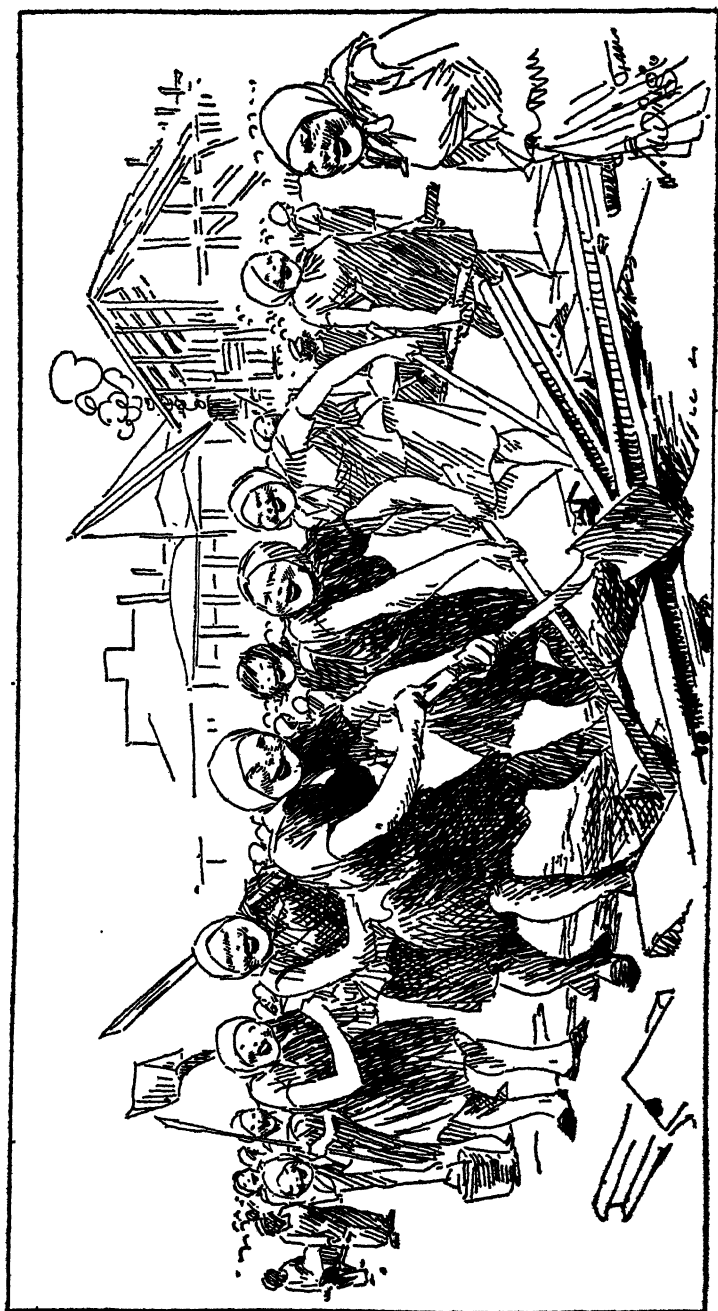
There is much talk in Russia that the second Five Year Plan, which was to succeed this one, will be delayed to let the people rest from their self-denial. The strict restraints have been almost more than the people could stand and a foretaste of the future must be allowed soon in order that they may not lose hope.

There is a delightful story about the government's effort to give the people something to quiet their insistent demand for something more than one-piece cotton dresses, work shoes and black bread.

One of the largest industrial developments, to which 14,000 workmen and women had been drafted from all over the country, began to sag heavily from "all work and no play."

The people had been housed and fed with the conventional roof and rough food. They had worked diligently for three years. Rubles had accumulated from their wages but what good were rubles when there was nothing to buy? What was the use of working when it got you nothing? Work was falling far below schedule. All the hortatory devices of propaganda, "slacker"

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AND THE NEXT MORNING FIVE MILES OF RUBY LIPS BLOSSOMED IN ZAPOROZHYE.

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epithets, promises of world conquest or threats of capitalistic invasion failed to bring about any visible signs of increased effort.

The Economic Council was appealed to for aid. They searched the stocks of goods for something that could be spared from their stringently calculated supplies. The best thing they could find was a supply of lipsticks and a cargo of lipsticks arrived. They went like hot cakes. The next day five miles of ruby lips blossomed in Zaporozhye.

They made a startling contrast to the faded work dresses, bare feet and kerchiefed heads of the women and girls as they ballasted railroad tracks, tamped concrete or mixed horse manure with mud and plastered the sides of the new workmen's cabins. But the people were delighted. Their lagging spirits were at least temporarily revived. Probably that is the first time heavy industry has been resuscitated with a lipstick.

The possibility that Russia, with her new mechanical equipment, will produce more than she can consume and undermine the markets of the world with her surplus is far remote. That she could have ever become a great consumer of American exports under the old conditions was impossible. She had nothing with which to buy. That she may become a great consumer under the new conditions is unlikely if she succeeds in her endeavor to produce her own sustenance. But there is much more possibility that she may in the future become a profitable customer of American trade under the new plan than under the old. At least she will have something to offer in trade, which is more than she had before.

And, finally, Russia could have only one object in undermining the world markets, if the time ever comes when her production exceeds her own demands. It

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would be that the people, as a whole, were willing to work at hard, daily toil, in order to bring about a world conversion to Bolshevism.

Of all the many classes of native Russians with whom I came in contact there was none that cared a whoop about what the rest of the world did about Bolshevism so long as the Russians, themselves, were allowed to develop their own resources and enjoy the fruits of their own labors.

To them the Five Year Program is a promise of increased comforts for themselves. They are looking forward to the time when the fruits shall ripen and they themselves can eat them.

If the Russian ability to produce should, in the course of time, prove surprisingly efficient and pour onto the world markets their surplus, it would require painful readjustment but it would be met, as it has been met many times before in the world's commercial experiences when other nations have come up from the bottom and established themselves in the front rank of world producers.

America, who in her brief career has upset more commercial applecarts than any other nation in the world, should be the last to complain about Russian industrial encroachment, if it should ever develop. Twice within the memory of the passing generation has America knocked European industry into a cocked hat, and as blandly accepted it as her right and privilege as though it had not caused consternation in the ranks of European finance and markets.

Sweden, always famous for the quality of its steel production, was once master of the world trade in that commodity, and with its natural resources of charcoal and iron seemed destined to remain so. Suddenly Amer-

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ica, with an unlimited supply of iron ore, came forward with a new process of manufacturing steel with coal as the reagent, and flattened Sweden, as well as the whole European steel industry, at one fell swoop.

That revolutionary act of a new contender in international trade followed shortly after America's conquest of the world wheat market, when the vast western plains of America, on which the buffalo had once roamed, were first plowed up and planted to grain. Then there was a great increase in wheat production which shook the markets of the world. The European peasants, from Sweden to the Mediterranean, were left aghast at the usurpation of their life-sustaining trade.

England's tin plate industry, Belgium's plate glass manufacturies, France's silks and Manchester's textiles all had their chairs pulled from under them by the precocious young Yankee inventor across the Atlantic. When electric production of cheap nitrates for fertilizers was invented, Chili, with her rich deposits of natural nitrate beds, was transformed from a rich man's paradise to an arid plateau for herdsmen.

The number of incidents could be extended indefinitely. Just now the Swedish lumber industry has had a price battle with the Russian exports until both were selling lumber at a price less than the cost of shipping.

The Russians began it by underselling. But they met their match in the Vikings, who accepted the challenge and undersold Russia until the Soviets could stand it no more and called for help. An agreement is now under way between the two interests which will settle the question of "dumping" in the lumber market from now on. The world will have to thank Sweden for the first victory over the new Russian trade invasion.



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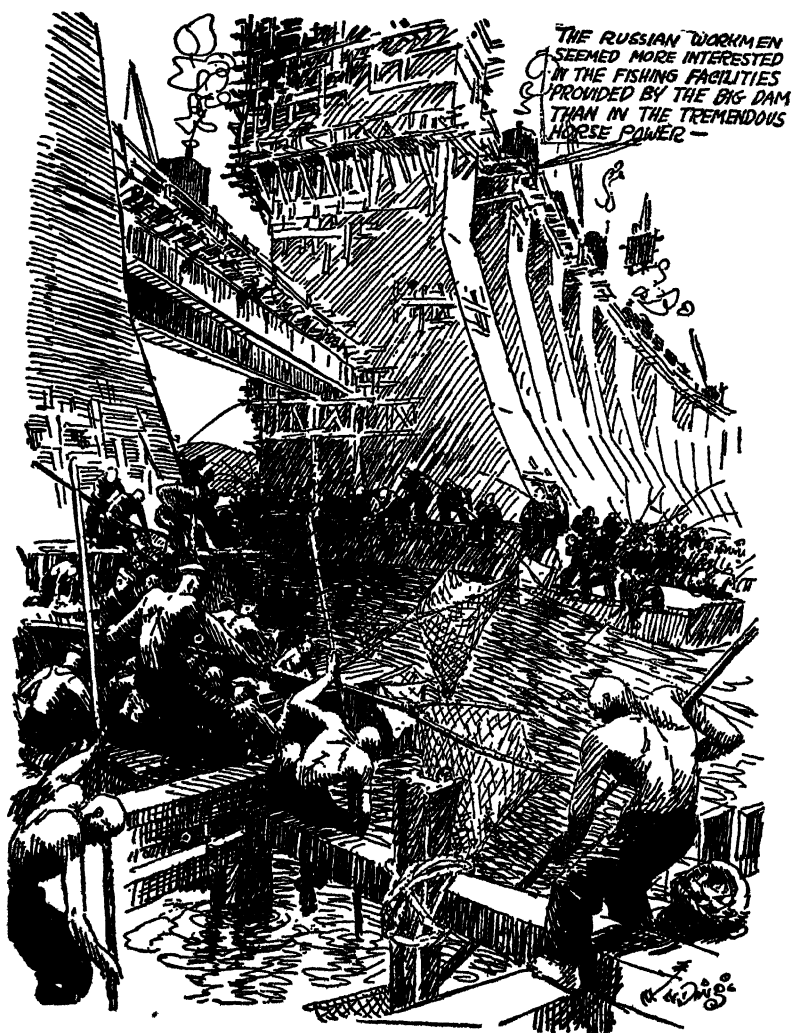
Russia is as badly hurt by the drop in commodity prices as anyone. She is getting less than half the revenue she had figured for her exports and must, by some means, make up the deficiency or default on her promises to pay the short time credits extended on her purchases of American and foreign machinery. The Russian ruble has no value in foreign exchange and if payment is made it must be in money received from the sale of goods in the world market. As it looks now, a serious mistake was made when in the League of Nations the question of extension of credits to the Soviet government was tabled.

It is a surprise, even to the most astute students of human nature, how few of the Russian people understand the real meaning of the mammoth industrial program. To the new Rulers of Russia it has been a vision of inspiration. They see in the great power dam across the Dnieper River at Kichkas a giant to lift the heavy load from the bent shoulders of workmen and women who swarm like ants over the huge cement piers. To the leaders the dam is an 850,000 horse power plant—to the workmen it is a fine place to sit and fish.

And so, throughout all Russia, you find the two groups. A very small one made up of the Party leaders and young students who measure the success of the Five Year Program by the long pull of the lifting power of the great new industries, and the other very large group who are going to judge the Five Year Program and the whole Soviet regime by the speed with which their simple wants and personal comforts are satisfied.

There were but two men in all the contacts I was able to make who expressed a hope that they might some day, by means of their plan, "get America by the throat." They were two German members of the

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International who had recently come into Russia and signed up as citizens. On the other hand, it is quite the rule to find the Russians looking upon America as their great example and their ideal. If they could grow to be like America their greatest ambition would be realized.

And so it turned out that before I was halfway around the great circle in Russia I had forgotten the old anxiety about the Five Year Program, and in its place had arisen the problem of how America might clean its own house of destructive and unbalanced production; how wise economic planning and surveys of future demands might take the place of speculation and the resultant periodic collapse.

A little more sane constructive thinking about our own shortcomings and less hysterical outcries about Russia would produce much better results.

Russia's Five Year Program is a "Raggedy Ann" dreaming of princely riches.

## XIII

### THE FIVE DAY WEEK

THE stranger in Russia is likely to find no incident in the topsy turvy existence of the people more confusing than the universally prevalent "Fifth Day off."

At home we have grown accustomed to expecting the people to be away from the office on Sunday and adjust our plans accordingly. But over here every day in the week you may, and probably will, find that your day's program is balked by someone on whom you were depending having reached his "fifth day."

In Russia the "rest day" is as difficult for a stranger to figure out as the signs of the Zodiac. His plans for sightseeing, travel and business are being constantly wrecked by the discovery, at the last moment, that the curator of the museum, the manager of the hotel, the guide he had counted on or the ticket agent with whom he had talked yesterday, is on his "fifth day off" and everything in that department will be closed for the day.

It is particularly disconcerting, after having spent a sleepless night in a wayside village, and being hysterically hopeful of not spending another there, to find that the official with whom you filed your passport yesterday, and the sole authority in such matters in the vicinity, will not be at his desk today. It is his fifth day off.

Since everyone in Russia is subject to this five day schedule and his day of rest changes each week there is

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no way to avoid conflict and disruption of your plans other than to memorize the particular daily schedule of every one with whom you are expecting to do business.

No wonder there is no unemployment in Russia. Just keeping track of the "fifth day" schedules of a man's business associates will add a few million personal secretary jobs in Russia.



The five day week, quite frequently confused in the American mind with a similar slogan for labor reform at home, has in reality nothing at all in common with it, and has nothing to do with shorter hours or an abbreviated work schedule. As a matter of fact they work more hours a week in Russia than we do in America with our seven day week, Saturday afternoon and Sunday off. Everyone in Russia works four days and rests one, but the "fifth days" are so "staggered" that each day one-fifth of the population rests while the other four-fifths work.

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It is very confusing to the tourist but is, in some ways, a perfectly working device, which in addition to distributing the rest periods equitably and efficiently among the work days, has relieved all the mechanical paraphernalia of holidays of the tremendous load of the entire population trying to find room on street cars, bathing beaches, parks and trains at one time.

The five day week has divided the population into five equal parts and on each day in the week one of these groups, comprising 20 per cent of the population, has its day off and all the facilities for recreation to itself. In the course of seven weeks everyone has had a Sunday, a Monday, a Tuesday and all the other days in the week to do what his fancy dictates.

The best understanding of what this five day week has accomplished in the way of eliminating the crushes incident to public holidays can be had by imagining Chicago, with its thousands of Sunday automobiles jammed along the highways leading to the country, or New York and the Boston Post road, with the inns and resort hotels along the way so full that elements of recreation are about all lost.

Divide these Chicago and New York weekend crowds by five and spread them out so that each day in the week has one-fifth of the Sunday mob and you can realize what a refreshing relief it would be.

The economic aspects of the five day week are equally interesting. For instance, consider the economic equilibrium which results from the constant distribution of trade through the week instead of jamming it all into a few brief, concentrated hours. Resort hotels and amusement parks, instead of having large extra forces for the weekend, who remain idle the other five days of the week, are able to maintain a constant force of

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helpers catering each day to an equal number of patrons.

The cost of the surplus equipment necessary to care for a peak load, as on an American Sunday, is proportionately decreased. The investment thus saved in street cars, public conveyances of all kinds, resort accommodations and even the width of the paving on the public highways is so great as to be an important item in the prosperity of the nation.

One Russian statistician, looking forward to the time when Russia will be as full of automobiles as America, and will have to have paved roads spanning the wide reaches of her territory, estimated that the saving in width of pavement due to dividing the holiday traffic would run into the billions.

That is perhaps a little too remote to be convincing but there is no denying the economy in industry where there is never any complete closing down for the weekend, no complete loss of overhead during the idle period or waste incident to stopping all the machinery on Saturday and starting again on Monday.

The workers like it and it is a good business policy. The only real reason I can find why the staggered "fifth day off" would not be practical and advisable for adoption by all the other nations is the orthodox observance of Sunday.

This objection in Russia is of course entirely eliminated, although the destruction of the churches and elimination of religion has been considerably overstated in the reports which have been sent out from the country.

The five day week would knock the observance of Sunday into a cocked hat but it would be a great thing for the public golf courses.



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Going into any of the large cities in Russia for the first time one is always surprised at the large number of people on the streets, in the parks and on the bathing beaches. They idle about, stroll back and forth apparently aimless in their wanderings. Their simple working costumes, which are all they have, lend weight to the first impression that there has been some mistake about Russian unemployment.

Here are thousands of people with nothing to do. The next day it is the same, and every day thereafter, and not until one becomes accustomed to a holiday crowd every day, and the workings of the "fifth day off," can he overcome the impression that the Russians are loafing on the job.

## XIV

### WORK FOR EVERYBODY

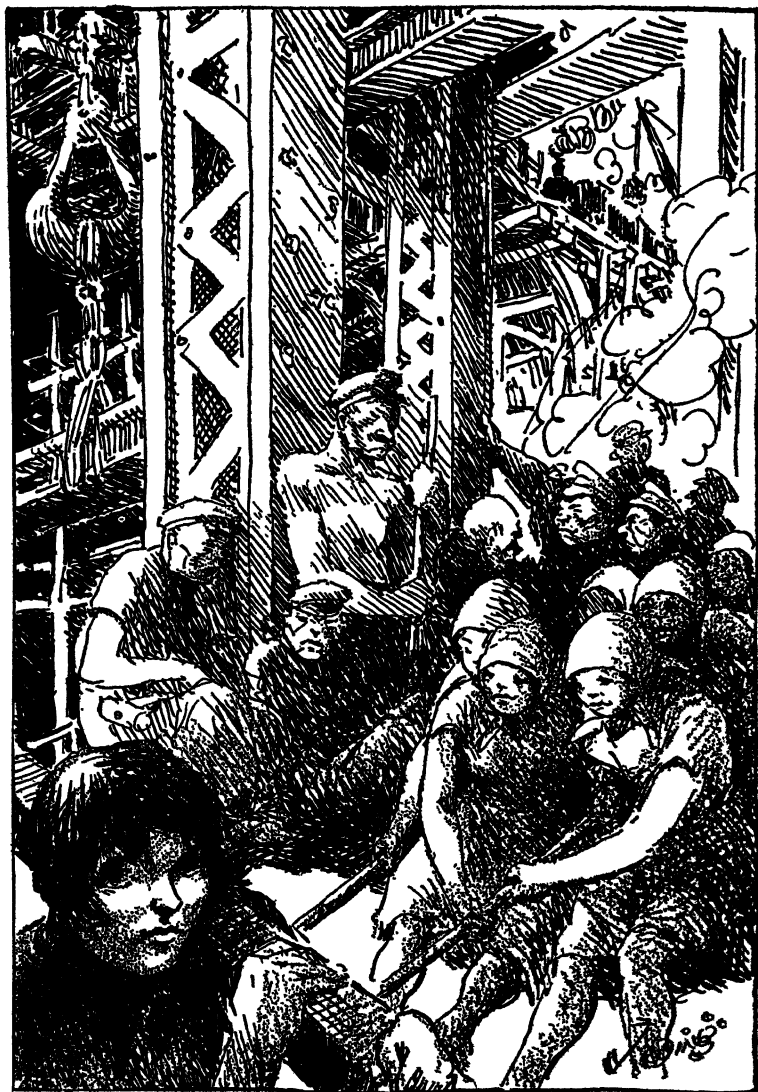
**N**O WONDER there is no unemployment in Russia. Wipe out all the industrial plants, all the modern residences, all the automobiles and everything else, down to suspender buttons, that have been made in America in the last hundred years, then try to replace them in five years' time and you wouldn't have any unemployment in America either—nor any place else in the world. Destroy everything and rebuild it and we would all be busy but we would also be hungry, as they are in Russia today—ten years after the revolution.

And that is a fair parallel of what all the noise and shouting is about in Russia today. It is the only great civilized nation in the world where they are so far behind that it will take them a hundred years, with all their cylinders working, to catch up with any of their progressive neighbors. Sometimes, looking at the so-called business depression, it seems as though the rest of the world had just decided to sit down and wait for Russia to overtake them. They will have a long time to wait.

It is interesting to note, in passing, that while Russia has chosen mechanization, electrification and industrialism to bring happiness to her people and lead them out of chaos, Gandhi, for India, has created an equally fine mess by leading his people away from machinery and back to the old spinning wheel.

It is a depressing commentary on human intelligence that most of the shouters for the new Russian experi-

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ment are equally vociferous in their cries for the Gandhi reforms, which are headed in exactly the opposite direction.

Anyone who thinks the state of employment in Russia is due to some newly discovered social and political Utopia or some new miracle-working thesis of government should go there and try it. He will find himself harnessed to a load so heavy and facing an uphill road so interminable that long before he reaches the golden pot at the end of his rainbow dream he will be resting his weary bones in his eternal grave.

Not that I wish to disparage the object of the Russian effort or to rob those poor simple people of one little degree of their hope. It would be a heartless world that could wish them to remain as they are. In fact, one cannot long contemplate their miserable state without feeling that anything they choose to do that will get the answer is justifiable so long as they do not poison the rest of the world with their patent medicines.

With a whole nation living in medieval poverty and trying to catch up to the Twentieth Century, certainly there is work for everybody and practically everyone who cares to is working. They have to, or starve.

But you never, in Russia, see anyone going up two steps at a time to get his job done. In all the big organized industries that are now on a production basis the schedules call for a heavy day's work from all the employes. Working to that schedule means, to the Russian workman, a more compelling and persistent effort than he has ever experienced. To him it is hard work. It seems to me that the women, who in Russia have always taken care of the heavy drudgery, are much more efficient than the men. You see them at the machine lathes, ballasting railroad tracks, operating

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locomotives and steam shovels. And when it is said that everyone is working in Russia, it means women as well as men.

But with all their pumped-up enthusiasm they move about as fast as a placid iceberg.

I noticed a bit of comedy in one of the largest of the new manufacturing plants, one of the key industries of the hectic Five Year Program. It wasn't comedy to the superintendent, who also saw it. It was tragedy to him but it was humanly characteristic.



Something like seventy-five million dollars, for which the people of Russia had starved themselves to save, had been poured into the great buildings and ponderous machinery for a plant which, according to the government schedule, was to begin production October first.

It was a breathless race against time. Sixty acres of factory buildings, some still in the scaffolding stage, had to be finished. Mountains of crated machinery, lathes, hydraulic steel presses, forges and blast furnaces choked the roadways and aisles, outside and in, waiting to be installed. Small individual units in each department were being set up to make parts so that the first

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automobile might be squeezed out on time. But no one seemed to be out of breath except the superintendent.

In the midst of this prodigious undertaking a group of about a dozen workers were gathered intently about a man who was trying to warm a can of tea over the flame of one of the recently installed \$20,000 gas blast-furnaces.



On a little, short-handled iron skillet, whose pan was a trifle too small to accommodate the base of his teapot, he was trying to balance his brew and manipulate it into the narrow horizontal orifice of the furnace which was designed for flat steel ingots. Every time he stepped on the blast lever the white hot flames would shoot out, burn his fingers and threaten the precarious equilibrium of the teapot.

Figuring gas at the price we have to pay for it in one of our instantaneous hot water heaters at home, that

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was going to be an expensive cup of tea for the U. S. S. R.

The experiment had been under way for some time when one of the bystanders, who should have been busy bolting a 200-ton hydraulic press to its moorings, had an idea.

With the whole group of "workers" at his heels he borrowed the skillet, walked over to one of the huge new \$40,000 pneumatic trip hammers, placed the 10¢ frying pan in the path of the big hammer, touched the foot lever and with a blow that would have forged an automobile crank shaft out of a block of raw steel he flattened the pan of the skillet into a pancake turner.

Now the teapot could be balanced without danger. It was a great success and the workmen waited to see the experiment brought to a happy conclusion. These machines, after all, were of some real value!

Even if I had understood Russian I am sure I could not have printed for you what the superintendent, who came in just at the windup, said about it. His language was unintelligible, but his gestures were eloquently profane.

It would not be fair, of course, to leave the impression that all work in Russia is accomplished with as little application as the teapot incident. Still there is something of that same childlike attitude evident in most of their labors.

The harvest this year in Russia was fifteen days late owing to intermittent rains. The wheat was dead ripe and still standing in the fields when I visited one of the largest of the state operated farms. Advantage needed to be taken of every minute of sunshine.

Imagine the embarrassment of the superintendent, who had driven me several miles to show me one of their modern harvesting operations, when we arrived on the scene and found all of the crew asleep under the wagons.

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One of the crew, evidently more highly sensitized than the rest, feeling the presence of strangers, raised his head and looked into the face of the boss. If a dynamite bomb had been about to explode in their midst the haste with which they scuttled to their posts could not have been more rapid. All that the superintendent said about this was to turn to me and ask, with a grim smile, if I had noticed any "forced" labor in Russia.

The Russians, if left to themselves, seem to me constitutionally opposed to hurried effort. No one is going to have nervous prostration from too strenuous a life, unless it be the Superintendents and heads of the government who have to reconcile their extravagant promises for production with the non-productive efforts of the workers.

Every device has been tried to induce in the minds of labor the necessity for efficiency and speed, without appreciable effect. At last Communism, the very soul of their creed, was thrown overboard and the old capitalistic system of graduated wages, piece work pay and bonuses has been applied. Since then things are working a little better. You may build factories in five years but it will take generations to make over the temperament of the 160,000,000 people.

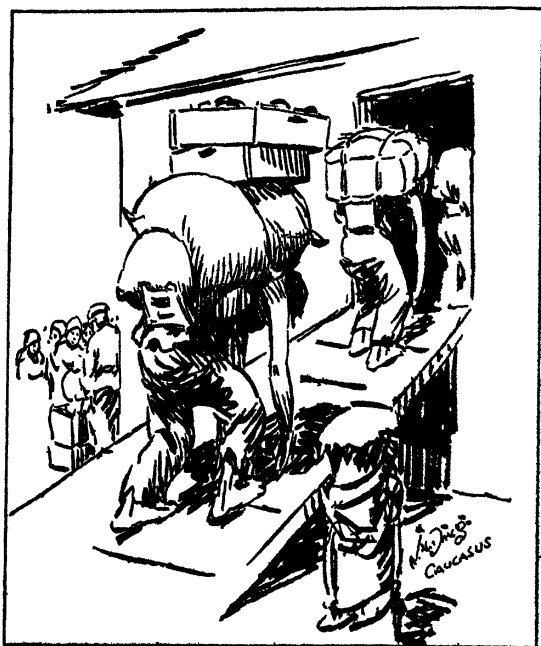
No matter what kind of government you have, or how you juggle your currency, even if you invoke Communism and assume that nothing costs anything because everyone works for nothing, there still remains the incontrovertible fact that a man must produce, per day, as much as he consumes or he will come to the bottom of his meal barrel. If the Russian mass of 160,000,000 people do not, in their combined efforts, produce as much as they consume, their economic structure will eventually collapse.



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Even with the admitted inefficiency of their labor Russia might easily produce more than her present meager consumption if it were not for the astonishing proportion of people who are employed in the innumerable government bureaus and produce nothing at all.

The overhead of personnel is tremendous. For every



middleman that was eliminated by the firing squad, there seem to be two new government clerks with brief cases.

Everywhere you look—in the factories, local affairs, farms and national government—the number of political superintendents it takes to see that the rest of the comrades keep busy is a reminder of the proverbial city hall methods at home. If Russia can make her economic ends meet in the long pull, then the municipal politi-

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cians who have bankrupted our American cities could take charge of our commercial business interests and make a grand success. The two methods are about parallel. American municipalities proceeded for many years with their extravagance on the theory that "it doesn't cost anything. It comes out of the taxes." There is a tendency in Russia to work according to a similar philosophy, that "Government work doesn't cost anything because of Communism."

Yes, everyone has a job in Russia. But they are not now getting even the ordinary comforts of life in return for their labors. Whether they ever get any more or not will depend on whether they can so increase their efficiency that, after carrying the heavy government overhead, they can still have a margin of surplus of production over consumption.

## XV

### TRAVELING IN RUSSIA

**N**ow I begin to understand why so many contradictory views are written by those who come out of Russia.

If you go just to Moscow and back, like Bernard Shaw, ride in specially provided automobiles, visit only with Stalin and have Lady Astor along as a companion you will come back with one kind of story.

If you are a highly valued advisor of the Russian government, like Colonel Cooper, and are met at the border with a private car and the best cook in Russia, you can go anywhere with pleasure and comfort.

If you should by any chance take your wife along and like Ely Culbertson, the great bridge expert, go gallivanting off the main traveled routes on strange trains with uncertain schedules, only "hard cars" to ride in and nothing to eat, you will come out of Russia with the immediate intention of enlisting in the Polish army and starting a war!

If you go only to Moscow and Leningrad and travel under the guidance of the "Intourist" Soviet government travel agency, stop at the only two good hotels in all Russia, ride only in first class railway coaches and the Intourist sightseeing automobiles, you will have a very interesting and comfortable time (if you don't expect too much) and your impression of the Russian Experiment will be benevolently moulded by the serviceable guides furnished by the government.

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But if you have an incurable bump of curiosity, think you'd like to find out for yourself how all the different kinds of people in Russia live and like the new government, and undertake to go bumping around all over Russia by yourself wherever you hear of a strange exhibit, I can give you some advice which will save you a lot of time and money. Don't go!

If any of the good friends and acquaintances whom I met in Russia and who did all they could to make me comfortable on my rounds should happen to see this advice and think me ungrateful, I'm not. I'm doing Russia a favor.

Many tourists I met who had gone into Russia with high spirits and kindly disposition came out with bitter resentment and their whole judgment discolored by their uncomfortable experiences. This was particularly true of those luckless tourists who happened to travel in the extreme south and thought, from the Intourist literature, that they were going to a Russian Atlantic City or Palm Beach, and discovered, too late to back out, that the old traveling salesman of forty years ago, who made all the small towns in the Middle West, rode the local trains or in a 'caboose and stopped at the primitive frontier hotels, had enjoyed solid comfort and modern conveniences by comparison.

Russia is intensely interesting as a laboratory of political and social experiment and for those who have dedicated their lives to the study of how to lead the human family out of chaos it is a great place to go. But for the tourist who wants to spend a pleasant vacation at a small expense it would prove a terrible disappointment.

If you must go, commit your souls to the care of the Intourist and make the circle into Moscow, north to

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Leningrad and out by the way of Riga. You may get sleepers most of the way and the Metropole hotel in Moscow and the Savoy in Leningrad have been made over into very comfortable quarters for the accommodation of foreign tourists.

Even on this simplified schedule you are as likely as not to encounter thrillers that will make good stories to tell the Rotary club when you get back home.

Two Boston gentlemen of high financial rating and ample experience in foreign travel barely missed being chucked off the train in the middle of the night at a way-station because of a slight irregularity in their railroad tickets, which they could not read and for which they were in no way responsible. But for the chance intervention of a fellow traveler these two men (who can pick their way through a 14 course dinner on Park Avenue and never pick up the wrong fork) would have spent the night, and perhaps longer, on the platform of a Russian village where their names on a check meant nothing at all to the Russian natives, and what they had to say in pure, Bostonian English meant even less.

Even as it was, their experience was harrowing enough. Being men of forethought and wide experience they had wisely limited their itinerary to Moscow and Leningrad and had placed themselves and all their traveling arrangements in the hands of the Intourist; and that travel agency is, I believe, one of the best managed branches of the Soviet government. What happened was typical of much that I encountered in Russia, although I am confident it was a rare exception in the Intourist management.

Their tickets, arranged by the Intourist, provided for two berths in the first class "International" sleep-

## TRAVELING IN RUSSIA

ing car on the night train from Moscow to Leningrad. The two berths were already occupied when the two gentlemen from Boston arrived.

The Russian people are universally accommodating and friendly in their personal contacts and after much unintelligible conversation between train attendants and all the Russian passengers in the car, a lower and upper berth in one compartment were finally arranged for the two Americans. Peace, quiet and good will was established, with much tipping of hats, hand-shaking, "thank you"s and "not at all"s, of which only the gestures were understood by either side of the controversy.

The peace and quiet were not for long, however, for about midnight some official of the train, in checking over the tickets, discovered that the two gentlemen from Boston were traveling to Leningrad on the night of August 7th, whereas their tickets read "August 8th."

The two gentlemen from Boston were ordered off the train, bag and baggage. They did not know what it was all about but as they stood there in their pajamas and round eyed mystification over the dilemma there was one thing that was very apparent from the gestures. That was the fact that they were no longer welcome on that train and the outside world in northern Russia in the middle of the night looked even less hospitable. There is nothing more tormenting to the human soul in such trying circumstances than two languages without a single sound of similarity, and which are written in different alphabets.

The Culbertson Bridge conventions may still cause heated debates in the realm of expert bridge players but Ely Culbertson will always have two undying supporters in Boston. He speaks Russian like a native and, aroused from his slumbers in an adjoining compartment by the

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conflict of tongues in the corridor, he intervened in behalf of his fellow countrymen. The dilemma was explained, but no amount of cajoling and argument would swerve the obdurate train official from his position that the two gentlemen from Boston must get off the train at the next station. No, he was not allowed to sell them new tickets on the train, that they might continue their journey. That was a government regulation. No, he could not make an exception because they were esteemed Americans and because the mistake was not theirs but that of the government's own agency, the Intourists. No, they would not be allowed back on the train even if they should buy new tickets at the next station because there was a heavy penalty for riding on Russian trains without proper railroad tickets. No, it would not be possible for them to pay the fine and proceed, first because he did not know how much the penalty should be and second because he was not endowed with the power to accept such a fine.

Patience and persistence, however, will wear away a stone and it was finally agreed, after much consultation and figuring, that if the two gentlemen from Boston would buy new tickets at the next station (provided that the ticket office was open at that time of night) and would pay a fine of seventy rubles (\$35.00) they might proceed on their journey.

A tremulous five minutes ensued while every friendly pocket was emptied into the pot to see if enough Russian money could be found to cover the expense of the two new tickets and the fine. (None of the regular Tourist Travel Checks are cashable in Russia except at especially designated bureaus in the larger centers of population.) Counting every Kopeck and shin plaster, there was just enough to buy two straight fare tickets and

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pay the fine. So it happened that two gentlemen from Boston, with high social and financial rating, sat on their baggage in the corridor of the train from Moscow to Leningrad and probably were never more grateful or happy in their lives.

That story was the result of an accident. Most of the desultory, meandering itinerary which I pursued developed complications quite as mystifying as those of the two gentlemen from Boston, but they were not accidents.

They were just the common, every day hazards of anyone who tries to do any independent pioneering along the far flung branches of single track railroads that span the vast distances of Russian territory.

The mistaken idea prevails pretty generally that the Soviet government interposes restrictions which limit the foreign visitor in his sightseeing in Russia. There is nothing to that. One may go anywhere he chooses in Russia, see anything he cares to look at.

The customs survey is much less of an ordeal than it is in America and the only limit to one's travel is the strength of his stomach and his capacity to endure punishment. Don't take a trunk unless you want to carry it in your hand all the way, and wear your old clothes. You will feel conspicuous in anything else for the Russian dress is the simplest possible and it is the same morning, afternoon and evening. Dress as though it were the day to carry out the ashes from the basement and you will be right in style.

My own troubles were softened by the efficient services of a most competent native Russian interpreter without whom I should have been, I am sure, still struggling to extricate myself from the intricate complications of travel in the southern Caucasus.



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Going south from Moscow on the main line to Sevastopol and the Black Sea resorts is fairly comfortable. You have a sleeper with a three-berth compartment and if you are traveling with an interpreter and are lucky you may have comparative privacy. There is also a diner, which seems pretty terrible until you get where there are none at all. Then you realize what a blessing you had overlooked.

For a while, going south from Moscow, the train follows the valley of the Moskva River and the American tourist gets an eyeful of the nude bathers who, in sum-



mer, swarm to the cool, clear waters of this friendly river and line its shores for miles in the vicinity of the city. Nude they were and nude they continued to be, if you cared to look, all down the Moskva River, the Dnieper River, the Black Sea and up the Volga, and wherever clear water afforded opportunity for a bath. Bathing suits are scarce and there are many things they need much more.

At every stop of the train along the way there is a rush of passengers, their teapots in hand, from their railroad coaches to the hot water faucet which juts from the wall of every railroad station in Russia. Tea,

## TRAVELING IN RUSSIA

tea, tea, every hour in the day. Everyone is always drinking tea. It is the national beverage.

After every stop of the train the coaches are all wrapped in silence while the passengers, old and young, consume the new brew from their heterogeneous teapots.

It isn't really tea they are drinking these days. All the real tea that is grown in Russia is said to be exported in exchange for money to buy lathes and machinery for their industrial program, but the substitute has the color of tea and a tang that resembles the fourth brewing from the same tea leaves. The tea is like their cigarettes—devoid of most of the original components, and a traveler in Russia can always buy his way into the good will of any group by the offer of a real tobacco cigaret.

The offer of a cigaret is an accepted sign of good will, anyway, among the Russians, and one made of real tobacco has the additional qualification of being an unobtainable luxury. My choicest crop of Russian experiences was harvested from a generous sowing of cigarettes.

I never tired of the scenes and pictures presented at the railroad stations. The platforms were nearly always full of people, always good natured, always with a little look of puzzled uncertainty as to just where they were going or how they were to get there, but entirely devoid of the faintest sign of worry or excitement.

Such a crowd in Italy, France or Spain would be exploding with expletives and excitement. In Germany and Holland they would be stolidly crowding each other out of the way half an hour before train time to insure for themselves advantageous positions. In Sweden and Norway they would be tipping their hats and

## DING GOES TO RUSSIA



I NEVER TIRED  
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bowing themselves out of front line positions in order that their neighbors might be better served.

Not so in Russia. No one is ever in a hurry.

They pile their belongings on the platform, brew a pot of tea and settle themselves comfortably for a nap. If their train comes and goes while they are asleep, what matter? There will be another train tomorrow or the next day. Everything is all right with them.

That makes the starting of trains a difficult problem and accounts for the fact that train schedules in the rural districts mean almost nothing at all. Everyone who is not asleep gets off the train at all the stops and by the time it is ready to start they are scattered to the four winds, visiting and chattering with new found friends, strolling up the streets of the towns or seated comfortably on the floor of the waiting room of the station.

The station master goes among them ringing a bell and calling out that the train is about to start. Nothing happens. Again the station master makes the rounds with his bell, shouting the Russian equivalent of "All aboard." Still no one moves.

A third time may garner a few recruits. It is now twenty minutes past the time of departure and a train official takes a hand. He makes the rounds and in no uncertain terms tells them to get aboard immediately or they will be left behind. A slight stir results from this notification and handshaking and good-bys are begun only to subside again when the train does not move.

At last the conductor, in exasperation, blows his little shrill whistle as a signal to the engineer to go. Then the real movement toward the coaches begins, leisurely and deliberate and often interrupted by delays while a few more last words are exchanged with those on the platform.

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At last, when all are back in their cars, the train moves on, only to repeat the performance at the next station, until the train is so late that you never can tell, when waiting for a train, whether the one that pulls in at 10:46 is the 7:20 express due that morning, or yesterday afternoon's local train, 14 hours late.

South you go all day, through the well-cultivated lands of the Ukraine, with its sturdy, little, straight-backed women with snub noses, round chins and twinkling blue eyes.

Wheat, wheat, wheat, potatoes and sometimes sunflowers and sugar beets. There is a good deal of sameness to the journey, broken only by the larger towns of Tula, Orel, Karkov and Zaporozhye, until the rougher country of the Crimea is reached and you pull into Sevastopol, that Russian port on the Black Sea which has a long record of sieges and battles for young history students to study but never remember.

Had I seen Sevastopol early enough in life I never would have spent all those irksome hours learning to recite that long poem about the siege.

Sevastopol is a dilapidated old port town, baking in the hot, subtropical sunshine. Why so much blood should have been shed by its conquerors and defenders is now hard to understand. It doesn't strike the casual visitor as being worth it. Evidences of former beauty remain but they are faded and drab. Except in the small commercial area, where the new government has constructed a row of workmen's apartment houses, a warehouse or two and a minor shipbuilding plant, the only thing to recompense you for a visit is its bloody history and a well painted panorama of the famous siege of Sevastopol.

There automobiles, none too plentiful anywhere in Russia, barely miss being entirely absent. We tried

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both of them and finally chose the worst looking one, but it still had one spring left in the rear seat cushion, on which we took turns sitting (my interpreter and I) as we rattled and bounced over the 30-mile drive at \$1.00 an hour to Yalta, the Atlantic City of Russia. Atlantic City may get some advertising out of the use of its name here but there is no element of flattery involved.



The last ten miles of the drive, however, rewarded us for our otherwise tedious and dusty journey. Coming through a pass in the rocky peaks which border the coast line, there opened out before us a long panorama of glittering blue sea and miles of steep, wooded slopes leading down to it, the slightly promontories dotted with palatial residences, the former recreation estates of

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Czars and Royalty. Here, in former days, the old monarchistic element had flowered and basked in the perpetual sunshine for which the Crimean coast is noted.

The late Czar's summer palace, a magnificent white stone structure with pavilions and service buildings that made a small village by itself was plainly visible in the middle distance surrounded by long rows of plume-like cypress trees.

Farther on was the massive granite hunting lodge of the earlier Alexander III, and in between and before and beyond, stretched hundreds of the lesser estates of the wealthy Russian families whose ancestry, by some turn of the wheel of fortune in the centuries gone by, had been endowed with vast possessions, which had been handed down from generation to generation.

There were very few "newly rich" in Russia. There was no chance or hope for anyone to ever climb out of poverty into affluence. That was the trouble and Trouble indeed it proved to be. Not one of the former aristocrats remains. Only their castles tell their story.

The Czar's palace is filled to overflowing with peasants, workmen, their families and the ever present teapots and rolls of bedding.

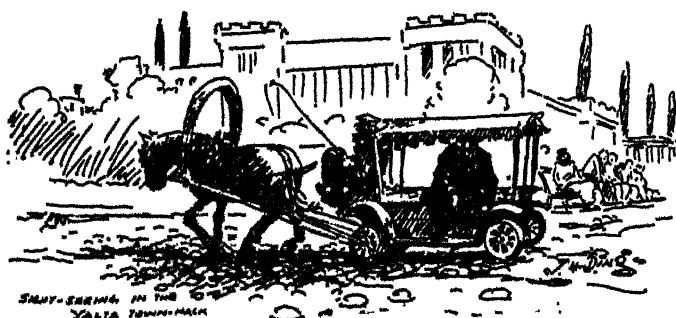
It has been made over into a pleasure and health resort where every month a new quota of vacationists arrives to taste, so far as their humble appreciation will let them, the joys which the kings and princes formerly kept only for themselves.

Alexander's old hunting lodge now houses eighty-one tuberculosis patients sent there by their workmen's guilds for treatment. The intention is good but the large, gloomy halls, still showing the peeling remnants of frescos and rococo plaster decorations of former days,

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are no place for T. B. patients. A row of tents out in the open air would serve the purpose much better.

Several thousand estates have thus been transformed into rest houses for the workers and it was reported that 300,000 of them could be accommodated every month. This figure seemed incredible until we reached the Yalta hotel and found how many they could pack into a relatively small area. How many were being accommodated in the room that we had hoped would be reserved for us was never totally revealed, but evidently the saturation point of the hotel had not been reached for our predecessors were moved out and



into the already well filled neighboring rooms, with no seemingly unpleasant results.

This Yalta place was the beginning of the great disillusionment about the Russian fairy tale. The fleas were bad enough but the toilet facilities were worse. Even to an old duck-hunter who is not too particular, it was unspeakably and inexcusably bad.

The 300,000 people who were reported to be enjoying themselves in Yalta at that time walked back and forth in the street fronting on the sea, limped about over the narrow cobble-stone beach, which served them for bathing purposes. There was absolutely nothing else



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to do. The Russians, however, were perfectly happy. There was no disguising the fact.

It is difficult to imagine so many people with nothing to do but enjoy themselves and a beautiful setting so absolutely barren of entertainment. Here were thousands of healthy men and women, sturdy youths and droves of children, and so far as I could discover the only diversion was a smudgy little storeroom about 12 X 14, fronting on the main street, with an oil cloth covered counter where one could buy frozen sweetened water with a little milk mixed in and called ice cream. Yet the people sang. This was the Russian Riviera.

One could not resist the reflection that there was something radically wrong with the American youth who, with all the facilities for amusement at his command, has to stay up all night and whet his jaded spirits with synthetic gin or spiked beer in order to feel that he has had a good time. Just one little portable victrola with a few old records would be a sensation in the midst of this former splendor of the Russian "Palm Beach."

We were to leave by boat the next day for a trip along the northern coast of the Black Sea. There was no boat the next day. The time tables were clear on the point that there were first class boats from Yalta to Batum every day, yet there was no boat the next day. There would be a boat the day after but it was already sold out. The hotel was not sure they could let us stay in our room after tomorrow. It had been engaged ahead by someone else. No, there was no other place to stay. Everything was filled to the limit. Yes, we could buy deck space on the boat day after tomorrow, or for the price of 340 rubles, they would see if they could give us the de luxe cabin.

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They could not be sure until the boat got in. Three hundred and forty rubles (\$170.00) for a three day boat trip, but meals and bedding were not included. We did stay in the hotel the extra day and we got the de luxe cabin and were almost reconciled to the price we had to pay because of the prospect of a private bath. (That bath turned out to be a real adventure.)

The boat was a beauty, built only two years before in Germany, and was one of a fleet of six that had been put into commission on this route. Three of them were already in the repair shop from careless handling and it was a safe prediction that our boat would not be long getting there if they kept racing their engines the way they did while we were aboard.

I have yet to figure out why they should have hesitated so about selling us the de luxe cabin. It quite evidently had not been opened for use for some time. It was all that the name implied in its original endowment of facilities. A bedroom with two neat, single brass beds, steam radiators and a bathroom with enough pipes and plumbing to furnish an apartment house. It had every device known to a German bathroom supply house, even to the old fashioned hour glass which you set when you enter the tub to regulate the duration of your bath—just the same as boiling an egg. But, alas, nothing worked.

The water had been turned off and when, upon request, it was turned on, the plumbing spouted water from every joint except the faucets, which were corroded shut. They could not be made to exude a drop.

The faucets proved unnecessary, however, for after a few minutes the floor of the bathroom was awash from other sources and the water swished back and forth with the motion of the boat like a surf-washed

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bathing beach. Every time we used that bathroom we had to call in the chief engineer.

If we could not turn on the faucets, neither could we turn off the heat. The valves there were also corroded tighter than a drum and the weather was the hottest I had ever known. The passengers were divided into first, second class and deck space quarters, but that distinction evidently ended with the purchase of the tickets. Everyone intermingled and slept on deck. That was excusable for it was unbearably hot in the cabins.

And so, via Novorossisk, Taupse and Sochi to Batum at the eastern extremity of the Black sea, during which time I reread "Red Bread" by Hindus and admired his restraint of expression.

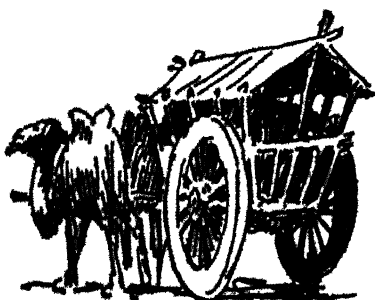
There is one sleeping car a week which runs from Batum to Tiflis and the Baku oil fields. It leaves Batum on Friday. We had planned our schedule carefully so that we might be on time to catch that sleeper. The next boat, on which we took passage, lost twelve hours along the way so we arrived a day and a half after the sleeper was scheduled to leave. We were just in time to catch it. We soon learned that it did no good to worry about train time tables.

Tiflis is the southern approach to the "Georgian Highway," the much advertised "most beautiful scenic highway in the world." We never found out whether it was or not for the bridges were all out, carried away in a cloudburst sixteen days previous to our arrival. The road was, therefore, impassable. It was characteristic of Russia's easy going temperament that there had been no broadcasting of the information about the closed highway and doubtless many tourists, like ourselves, who had gone many miles out of their way to take this famous ride, were left stalled at either end with no alter-

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STRANGE  
SCENES AND  
STRANGE PEOPLE, THAT  
WERE REMINDERS  
OF THE PICTURES IN  
OUR OLD GEOGRAPHIES.



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native but to double back on their course or make a wide two days' detour by rail with scant accommodations.

It cost \$20 an hour for a car with which to see Tiflis. The city has been destroyed by siege and rebuilt thirty times. When the Soviet government rebuilds it again I'd like to go there for it is magnificent in its setting.

So on to Baku, Mineralniye Vodi and Rostov, with the one great interest watching from the trains the kaleidoscopic change of races, people and costumes, remnants of the tides of invading hordes from Persia, Mongolia, Asia Minor and the north. Strange vehicles and headgear that took me back to the pictures in our



old geographies. All of this territory is well worth a visit but until the means of travel are greatly improved the costs in discomforts are too great for tourist enjoyment.

There is little need to reiterate the trials of the adventurous traveler on through the state farm areas to Stalingrad. It is sufficient to say that there is no timetable in Russia which means anything so far as time of arrival and departure of trains are concerned, except in and out of Moscow and Leningrad and the main

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traveled railroad lines. Misinformation is most abundant and the only safe way to make a train is to do as the Russians do: pile your baggage on the station platform and sleep on it until a train comes along going your way.

The Volga boat song and advance advertising had made us look forward to the four day trip up the Volga River with great and pleasurable anticipation.

It turned out to be a good boat, with a bath tub and the first good food served on a clean table-cloth we had seen in many a day. The Volga boatman's song isn't as musical as the orchestra version and the scenery along the shores reminds one of nothing so much as the Missouri River scenery through South Dakota, which has never been noted for its grandeur. But to sleep in a clean bed and get up to a good breakfast was bliss after life in the Caucasus!

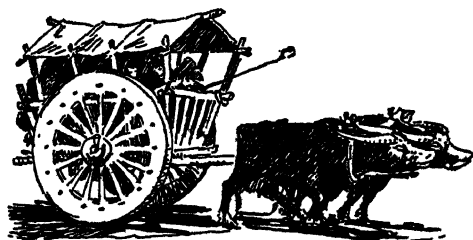
The Russian people all along the itinerary had been friendly and interesting, but on the leisurely trip up the Volga one had ample time to enjoy them. They are delightful, full of fun but shy, and sing on the slightest provocation. One can never believe them to be wilfully cruel, selfish or heartless after associating and traveling in intimate contact with them for a few weeks.

One almost forgets how meager and primitive a picture Russia presents when he listens to the hopeful dreams of these poor souls and witnesses the casualness with which they bear their trials.

Not until your train crosses the Russian border coming out of the country and you awake in the morning to look out of your window upon an Esthonian landscape with people fully clothed, houses well kept, gardens full of flowers and flourishing vegetables and a well groomed and comfortable civilization, do you fully

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realize what a depressing experience you have been through and what a long way Russia has to go!



## XVI

### THEY STILL GO TO CHURCH

I WENT to church almost every Sunday while in Russia. (That's a lot better than I do at home.) Anyone may go who cares to do so. Except that there were no chiming church bells to herald the Sabbath, there was nothing to indicate that going to church was frowned upon by the government authorities. There was no interference in any way, so far as I could detect, either with me or with the Russian people who chose to attend divine worship.

I remember with what expectant thrills I set out on my first venture. In a land where the government frowns on religion as violently as America frowns upon liquor, it seemed that going to church might be something like going to a speakeasy. Possibly there would be a raid. I think I secretly harbored the hope that there would be one. I would like to have seen how they did it, and I remember assuring myself that I had my passport for identification in case of extreme need. One's imagination works overtime during the first few weeks in Russia.

My first Sunday was at Zaporozhye, one of the industrial cities of the Ukraine. There was no difficulty in locating the church. Its spires stood out boldly above the low skyline of the residential section.

The church doors stood wide open. Sounds of the chanted service drifted out to the streets. Intermittently, as the choir took up the service, the music of their *T*



## DING GOES TO RUSSIA

*Deums* and anthems could be heard some distance away. Peasants, men and women, singly and in groups, came and went as if they anticipated no hindrance.

Within, perhaps a hundred people stood or knelt on the stone slab floor in the open space in front of the altar where the elaborate ceremony of the Russian Greek church was being conducted. Priests in full regalia before a gorgeously decorated altar intoned the service in rich, melodious voices. A full vested choir of mixed voices joined in the responses and sang the beautiful musical composition of the Greek service most skillfully. Anyone who has ever listened to the well rendered music of the Greek church services will never forget its exquisite beauty. When the Russian people sing, it is nearly always worth listening to and when a well drilled Russian choir sings the service in the Russian Greek church, you are treated to something that is seldom equalled in sacred music.

I never saw any of the churches in Russia more than partially filled with worshipers. The service is continuous and the people come and go throughout the day. It has always been so. There are no seats or church benches and the worshipers group themselves before the altar, alternately standing or kneeling as suits their devotional mood and apparently following no convention of the services going on before them. Their devotions completed, they depart.

A Communist scoffer who accompanied me one Sunday pointed out that the attendance at church was largely made up of the elderly and middle aged, which aroused the reflection that the ages of the church goers in Russia correspond pretty closely to our Sabbath observers at home. I frequently noticed numbers of young mothers who had brought their babies for

## THEY STILL GO TO CHURCH

baptism. The Atheism of the new order has not succeeded in striking deep enough to wipe out the desire to have their babies baptized, even among some of the staunch followers of the Soviet regime.

All of the churches and the priesthood are suffering from lack of financial support, I am told, but to one



THE OLDER RUSSIAN PEASANTS STILL ARE REVERENT AND CROSS THEMSELVES BEFORE PARTAKING OF FOOD.

who had never seen them in their affluent days, the services which I attended seemed, from outside appearances, to be adequately maintained.

Many churches in Russia have been torn down and still others are marked for destruction. But there are still standing so many more churches than have been

## DING GOES TO RUSSIA

wrecked, that, except for the attention which has been focused upon the destruction, the casual traveler would probably not be aware that any were missing. A great many of the churches still in existence no longer hold services because of lack of funds to support the priests, and I was told, by a Communist, that it is only these churches which have closed their doors that are destroyed by the government. (He also informed me that the government was far behind with its work.) But judging from the vacant spaces in the churches I attended there is still ample room and divine ministrations for all those who feel inclined to seek it.

There can be no doubt that the Soviet government is doing all within its power to tear out by the roots everything pertaining to the worship of God. Everything that can contribute to the alienation of the people from the ties of the old Russian church is being brought forcefully to bear. Public speakers, printed tracts, huge posters and the government itself, vie with each other in bitter denunciation of all religion.

Some of the old churches have been transformed into museums for the display of anti-religious propaganda and in the niches where the sacred icons once stood are now blatant slogans and flaming posters telling the visitors that "God is a grafter" and the church a "device invented by the rich to cheat the poor." Blasphemous cartoons, depicting the utmost in sacrilege, "adorn" the walls. When churches are torn down the salvaged building materials are carted away to be used in the erection of the new temples of worship: the Industrial plants of the Soviet government.

With naïve effrontery the Soviet government assumes the omnipotence of God and in its new materialistic creed paraphrases the precepts of the Christian

## THEY STILL GO TO CHURCH

faith, substituting the name of the Bolshevist government for that of the Lord.

Sell all thou hast and follow the Soviet leaders.

Take no thought for the morrow for the U. S. S. R. will provide.

One might rewrite the Twenty-third Psalm to read "The Soviet government is my shepherd; I shall not want. It maketh me to lie down in green pastures. It leadeth me beside the still waters. It restoreth my soul," etc. In doing so you would not exceed the opulent promises which the new government holds out to its people. That the Soviet god is a jealous god needs no confirmation to those who have followed the vengefulness of its conduct.

There is a bitterness and display of venomous hatred in all this anti-religious propaganda which cannot be accounted for on the ground of simple unbelief. The vicious warfare against the church reflects an origin far more violent than mere difference of opinion or atheistic convictions. In looking for the cause one finds that there are two sides to the story of the destruction of the Russian church. In the sensational transmission of the narrative for American consumption only one side has been elaborated. The reasons which lie back of the anti-church crusade have been pretty generally overlooked and in all fairness they should at least be mentioned.

The despised Czar was the head of the church of Russia. That fact, in itself, is perhaps sufficient explanation, but there is more. Like the government of the Czarist regime, the church was honeycombed with graft and political parasites. It was a polluted nest of debauchery, favoritism and injustice. It fattened on the helpless masses of liberty-less people by a system

## DING GOES TO RUSSIA

of tithes and impositions no less despicable than the systematized graft of the political overlords. The church, thus immersed in robbery and corruption, claiming to be the purveyor of divine guidance, looked to the people very much like the same kind of hokum by which the Czarist government had cheated and despoiled them while posing as their "little father." When the tempest of revolt finally burst and swept away the Czarist government, it took the Czarist church with it. The two were shackled together too closely for discrimination. Nothing that savored of the rule of the old monarchy could claim clemency.

And although revolutions are usually born of injustice they do not bring justice. That which follows revolution is revenge. Destruction is complete and in the violence of the moment all merit is denied the lost cause. Thus it was that the church, which shared with the Czar in the exploitation of the people, shared also his destruction.

From the corrupt monarchy of the Czar, Russia jumped to Communism. From the corrupt church it jumped to atheism. There is a perfect parallel in cause and effect and in the arc they described in reaching their new position.

Few will rise to defend the old government of the Czar. The indictment against the church was, in principle and in fact, the same. The violent back-swing of the pendulum is a problem in physics, not metaphysics. It was inevitable and those who seek to solve the problem of the church in Russia on ethical grounds will find no answer in the back of the book. To call it a revolt against religion is to misname it. It was purely a physical reaction.

The instinct for worship is, in my judgment, still strong in the people of Russia. They have leaned heavily

## THEY STILL GO TO CHURCH

THOSE WHO CARE TO  
GO TO CHURCH IN RUSSIA.  
STILL MAY DO SO.



YOUNG MOTHERS  
STILL TAKE THEIR  
BABIES TO CHURCH  
FOR BAPTISM.



## DING GOES TO RUSSIA

upon the staff of religion for centuries. It is hardly conceivable that a people nurtured on the spiritual consolation of divine faith should suddenly divest themselves of that ingrained instinct and be satisfied, for long, with the solace to be had in a god of machinery, that new Golden Calf erected by the Soviet Union at whose feet the Russian people are invited to worship.

It is so easy to make a sensational story out of anything pertaining to religion that the Moscow correspondents have found it a fruitful source of pay copy. Since my return I have seen, in nearly all the American papers, double leaded stories about the tearing down of the largest cathedral in Moscow. The purpose is attributed to the desire of the government to salvage the gold from the gilded dome. The architectural beauties of the cathedral are enlarged upon and an attempt is evident to make the act of tearing down this cathedral into an atrocity like the wartime destruction of the cathedral at Rheims.

The story was going the rounds while I was in Moscow and I went to see the cathedral. Except that it bore the name of a church I could not become greatly incensed over its disappearance. To be sure, it is the largest cathedral in the city and perhaps it is better designed than the average Russian church, but as an architectural treasure to be preserved for the aesthetic enjoyment of future generations, it has little value. It had long ceased to be used as a place of worship, was far removed from the residential areas, and stood on a promontory overlooking the Moskva River, blocking the natural flow of heavy traffic at the juncture of two major highways. Within a few minutes walk of the cathedral is an exhibit of maps and architectural drawings of the new City Plan and Civic Center of

## THEY STILL GO TO CHURCH

Moscow, which furnish a much more plausible reason for tearing down the cathedral than rescuing the gossamer tissue of gold from the dome. The area in question where the cathedral now stands forms an important part in the future development of the streets and boulevard system of Moscow, and after looking over the plans I was convinced that the so-called atrocity was about equally as sensational as the removal of the old First Congregational Church at Eighth and Pleasant Streets, in Des Moines, to make way for the opening of the Eighth Street thoroughfare to Keosauqua Way.

The story of the destruction of the beautiful (?) Russian cathedral, like so much of the sensational twaddle which has been written about Russia, blew up when you merely looked at it.

